



LOLLIPOP PATROL IS UNDER REVIEW

Report by Clare Butler

CONCERNS have been raised over proposals to scrap lollipop patrols in Dudley and possibly introduce 20mph zones outside all schools in the borough.

The suggestion in a safety review comes less than a year after controversial plans to axe funding for school crossing patrols were ditched by cash-strapped Dudley Council.

A new study has revealed that 70 per cent of the patrol sites do not currently meet national criteria, while chiefs have been urged to make 'advisory' 20mph zones outside all school entrances 'a high priority' as part of a package of safety measures.

A council report says: "It is recommended that the council's 10-year plan to implement advisory 20mph zones outside all school entrances, under the safer routes to school scheme, should be made a high priority."

The study, carried out ahead of a meeting, reveals that 55 out of 79 school crossing patrol sites in the borough are not hitting national guidelines, giving bosses a case to remove them.

Risk

The report says: "The national criteria for school crossing patrols (SCP) is widely accepted and does enable councils to provide substantial satisfactory evidence and justification to remove a SCP where the site does not meet the criteria, without putting children at risk."

It was reported that only 35 per cent of parents who responded said they relied on the patrols to provide a safe crossing for their child.

But Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We know how important school crossing patrols are to some people. We want to see the school crossing patrol service continue to encourage children and families to walk to school rather than jump in the car."

"The outcomes of the studies we have carried out will be considered by a scrutiny working group in order to identify what options we have for continuing to provide a service into the future."

Abdul Quadas, a former school governor from Lye, said: "I would like to see lollipop ladies saved. It is a cut culture."

Labour's Councillor Hilary Bills said: "We need crossing patrols in the right places. I hope we always put children's safety first."

£50K HAUL OF ILLICIT TOBACCO SEIZED IN RAIDS



Police and trading standards officers with the haul of illegal tobacco worth £50,000 seized during raids in the Stourbridge area

AROUND £50,000 worth of illicit tobacco and cigarettes were seized – £20,000 of that from one shop – following a sting operation in Stourbridge.

The raids were carried out in a joint intelligence-led operation between Dudley trading standards and West Midlands Police.

Stourbridge Police tweeted on Friday: "Joint Operation with Trading Standards yesterday, £50,000 worth of illicit tobacco

and cigarettes seized, over £20,000 worth of it from one shop in Stourbridge @FSU WMP @StourbridgeWMP @myDudleyTSO @BWYK9."

The teams used sniffer dogs to help track down the illegal goods which were bagged up to be taken away at the end of the operation.

It comes in the latest of a series of raids across the Black Country, which earlier this month saw £70,000 worth of illegal tobacco

seized from four shops in Sandwell. The businesses were targeted as part of the wider Safer 6 campaign.

Last month the campaign saw more than £15,000 worth of illegal tobacco seized alongside bottles of counterfeit vodka. The shops were reported as being investigated by trading standards – those found guilty facing criminal prosecution which could result in an unlimited fine and even imprisonment.

ARREST

Murder investigation after man stabbed

A MURDER investigation is under way after a man was found dead in his own Black Country home with multiple stab wounds. Police were called to Corngreaves Walk, Cradley Heath, at 11.45am on Monday where a 47-year-old man was pronounced dead at the scene.

A 47-year-old man, from Tividale, was arrested on suspicion of a series of assaults at addresses in Dingle Avenue, West Avenue and Poplar Close. He is in police custody on suspicion of murder, attempted murder, wounding and vehicle theft.

Detective Chief Inspector Edward Foster, said: "I'm appealing for anyone who was in the Corngreaves Walk area at around 6pm on Sunday and saw or heard a disturbance to contact us."

"We have established a timeline and suspect three people were subjected to nasty assaults involving weapons, including a knife and metal bar, in the space of just over two hours. These are understood to be domestic incidents where the suspected attacker is known to the victims."

"It's then believed the same attacker stabbed a man in his home in Corngreaves Walk just after 6pm but his body lay undetected in the house until just before midday Monday. Police family liaison officers are supporting the deceased's family."

The suspect was arrested from a vehicle at the Asda car park in Oldbury by officers investigating reports of a stolen van.

Anyone with information is asked to call West Midlands Police on the 101 number.

CRIME

£1.5 million drugs gang is sentenced

SIX members of a £1.5 million drugs ring have been jailed for a combined total of nearly 48 years.

The group, sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court, conspired to deal heroin and cocaine across the Black Country between October 2015 and April this year. The operation was based at a flat in Lye.

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INSIDE DOG LOVERS HELP SHELTER



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Enhanced status to protect memorials

WAR memorials in the Black Country are set to be given Grade II listed status as part of First World War commemorations.

A decision has been made by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on the advice of Historic England, to make the move as the sites reach their centenary.

The memorials include two from Dudley, with the Quarry Bank Peace Memorial and Garden at Stevens Park being given Grade II status.

Respect

The Stourbridge War Memorial at Mary Stevens Park moving up to Grade II* status from Grade II.

Sedgley councillor and UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge said: "I think it is brilliant that war memorials are getting the respect they deserve.

"They are the place where people can remember and pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice so this news is welcomed."

Two Sandwell memorials, the Old-

bury Cenotaph and Bearwood War Memorial, are also set to be Grade II listed.

Sandwell councillor Peter Allen, a member of Tipton Royal British Legion group, said: "This is very welcome because anything that can offer these sites protection and support is good news."

Confiscated cash used to support credit union

CASH confiscated from loan sharks will be used to reward people who save through a credit union in a Black Country borough.

Castle & Crystal Credit Union, which is supported by Dudley Council, has launched the scheme to encourage people to start saving this festive period while also making them aware of the dangers of loan sharks.

The first 50 people to join the credit union – and save a minimum of £10 per month for the first three months – will get a £25 savings boost directly into their account.

The cash will come from money confiscated from convicted loan sharks at court under the Proceeds of Crime Act, with the initiative being run jointly with the England Illegal Money Lending Team.

Chiefs said they hope this will encourage residents to build up savings for Christmas, and prevent more people from having to turn to a loan shark to borrow emergency cash.

The scheme is only available to residents living in the council wards of Upper Gornal and Woodsetton, Coseley, Kingswinford, Wall Heath and Wordsley.

It has been backed by the Dudley mayor, Councillor Dave Tyler, who has opened an account and will donate the £25 to his three mayoral charities – Dudley Mind, the YMCA Black Country Group and the Dudley branch of the Alzheimer's Society.

Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "Loan sharks often target low-income and desperate families; preying on struggling individuals and exploiting them for personal financial gain.

Alternative

"We're really pleased to have the support of the England Illegal Money Lending Team and are committed to ensuring people in need have an alternative to loan sharks and illegal lenders in their local community.

"People will greatly benefit from this scheme. It will help them to establish a healthy savings pattern, as well as benefit from the many credit union services available to members."

Tony Quigley, head of service for the England Illegal Money Lending Team, which is run by national trading standards, said: "We are pleased to be working with Castle & Crystal Credit Union to launch this new incentive, which will see loan sharks cash being put to good use, to sponsor new credit union accounts. Loan sharks can have a horrific impact on our communities and should never be used under any circumstances."

An estimated 310,000 households nationally are borrowing from illegal money lenders, many of whom charge exorbitant rates of interest .

Kind-hearted dog lovers helping shelter

By Diane Davies

TWO Black Country businessmen were so moved by the plight of street dogs in Romania they helped rebuild a rescue shelter.

Paul Morris who runs Halesowen firm P&R Morson and colleague Stuart Sowden were so keen to help the charity that they got on a plane and flew out to Bacau and will soon be returning to carry out more work.

They stepped in to help West Midlands-based Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue which has a shelter in Bacau for abandoned, abused and injured puppies and dogs found on the streets. The team in the UK then helps to find them new homes. Which is how Paul and Stuart heard about the charity.

Friend Katie Hughes, from Hagley, adopted a rescue puppy called Nelly from the organisation and decided she wanted to find out more about where her pet had come from.

Visit

Katie travelled to Romania with friend Anna Hughes, from Stourbridge, to see for themselves the reality of the situation. They posted updates on social media which were seen by dog lovers Paul and Stuart.

Paul, who heads the mechanical and electrical contractors, said: "When we saw Katie and Anna's updates, we knew we wanted to get involved and use our own skills to help improve the shelter. One of the biggest challenges is that the weather in Romania is harsh, reaching -25 in winter, and the kennels are all outside."

Stuart said: "We started looking at ways to improve the electricity and water at the shelters, to help keep them warmer, and also to reconstruct the kennels so that they are better protected from the elements."

For more information visit www.sadiesstraydogrescue.com or Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue group on Facebook.



Katie (left) and Anna at Sadie's shelter in Bacau



A rescued dog with one of the new kennels



Nelly the dog rescued in Romania now has a brighter future



Paul Morris (left) and Stuart Sowden meet the dogs

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Club warned over future conduct after flare thrown

A FOOTBALL club has escaped punishment after a flare was thrown onto the pitch during a game but has been warned about the future conduct of supporters.

The flare was thrown from the Halesowen Town supporters section during an away match against rivals Stourbridge last month in the popular no9 derby at Stourbridge's War Memorial ground.

A woman in her 60s was hurt after being struck in the throat by a flare during the derby.

Halesowen Town said in a statement: "The Football Association has considered the matter and will not be taking any formal disciplinary action against the club on this occasion.

"However, we have been advised that the club could face disciplinary action if further reports of spectator misconduct are received and the FA will reserve the right to refer to this current matter in such circumstances.

"The club would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that supporters should be aware that any form of pyrotechnics are banned at football matches and use of these at a match is a criminal offence and can lead to ejection, arrest, criminal record and a banning order."

Halesowen Town won this particular match 2-1 thanks to two goals from Daniel Udoh. Ryan Rowe replied for Stourbridge.

Online campaign against sex abuse

THE shocking reality of how abusers groom young people is the focus of a new campaign that has been launched with the backing of Dudley Council to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

The animation from the regional see me, hear me partnership focuses on warning signs of this hidden crime.

Following the story of a young girl, it shows how those around her notice changes in her behaviour. It then turns to the abuser who grooms her with gifts, alcohol and affection before abusing her, adding 'the warning signs were there.'

The animation will go out via social media platforms as 30 second clips with the full version on the campaign website www.seeme-hearme.org.uk

Supermarket fun

ASDA Brierley Hill's community champion Emma Flavell is to host a BBC Children in Need fundraising event in store tomorrow (Friday) from 10:30am, centred around the new campaign, the Power of Play.

Proud moment for new standard bearer



Stuart Garlick takes over as standard bearer from Ron Greenfield.

YOUR town needs you – and Stuart Garlick has answered the call.

The former military man has volunteered to become the new standard bearer for Brierley Hill after 85-year-old Ron Greenfield was no longer able to perform the duty after 10 years of service.

Mr Garlick, aged 59, from Kingswinford, will now hold the flag and lead Remembrance parades in Brierley Hill and at military funerals.

Mr Greenfield issued a plea through the Express & Star and Mr Garlick, who served as a trooper in the Queens and Mercians Warwickshire Regiment, was happy to help.

He said: "We should not be able to forget the history of the world wars and other conflicts.

"I do feel quite strongly about it, it needs to carry on year after year. British legions are suffering, numbers are down and if we didn't do something like this they would die out."

It will be a proud moment for Mr Garlick, who served in Northern Ireland and Gibraltar in the 1970s, when he leads the town's Remembrance Day procession on Sunday.

He said: "I feel a little nervous. I really don't want to let Ron or anyone else down. It was quite emotional for me, this guy has been doing it for years and years."

Members of £1.5m drug gang put behind bars

SIX members of a £1.5 million drugs ring in Dudley have been jailed for conspiring to deal heroin and cocaine across the Black Country.

The operation was based at a flat in Chapel Street, Lye, where drugs were weighed and packaged. Members had nicknames, roles, shift patterns and pool cars and claimed expenses.

A police expert who analysed ledgers seized from the HQ described them as 'the most meticulous and detailed records of drug dealing on this scale' they had ever seen.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that it was from those documents the gang's turnover was estimated at around £1.5m over the 18 months they were active.

Ringleader, Lea Brown, aged 32, of Dudley, was jailed for 13 years after being convicted of conspiring to supply heroin and cocaine. He was given a further three years for unrelated drugs offences and two counts of dangerous driving.

HJason Isaarg, 26, from Brierley Hill, was sentenced to eight years and six months having pleaded guilty to the two conspiracy charges on the first day of trial.

Dealers

Street dealers Anthony Smith, 23, of Netherton, and Timothy Pascall, 22, of Dudley, were jailed for seven years and eight months, and seven years and three months respectively. Smith pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charges two days into the trial, while Pascall admitted the offences on its first day.

Dealer Hammas Naem, 23, of Lye was jailed for four years having only been convicted in relation to cocaine.

Ian Martin, 40, from Quarry Bank, was jailed for three years and 10 months. He divided the drugs into deal-sized amounts and kept the records. He admitted both conspiracy charges on the basis he was involved only until May 2016.

Prosecutor Mr Kevin Barry, said: "These were dealings on a significant scale geared towards large profits."

We will remember them...



The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, lays a wreath as Dudley honoured its war dead on Sunday

MORE than 3,000 people came to Dudley on Sunday to pay their respects at the annual Remembrance Sunday parade and service.

Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, laid a wreath at the memorial in Coronation Gardens. Members of the community,

civic dignitaries, students from Dudley College and cadets gathered for the event, which included a parade through the town with armed forces veterans and a service at the cenotaph in Ednam Road. The Salvation Army band and Dudley Performing Arts students performed.

The mayor said: "It has been a privilege to lead our commemorations to honour the fallen and remember the sacrifices they made to protect future generations. We owe them our freedom."

Am Armistice Day service was also held on Saturday at the Clock Tower in Priory Street.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lottery players get free museum visit

THE Black Country Living Museum will offer free entry to National Lottery players on Saturday.

Museum bosses are making the offer as a show of thanks to the lottery, which has provided millions of pounds in funding for its major re-vamp.

Visitors will have to show a lottery ticket for draws between November 13 and 26 to gain entry.

Heritage Lottery has so far awarded almost £10 million to the museum, funding plans to expand the site by a third, including the creation of a 1940s-60s town.

Jobs lost as firm in administration

MORE than 30 jobs have been lost after a steel firm went into administration.

The entire workforce at Kingfisher Industrial Management in Cradley Heath has been laid off, administrators have revealed. It is believed that 36 people have been made redundant.

Administrators RSM Restructuring Advisory LLP said: "Damian Webb, Phillip Sykes and Diana Frangou from RSM Restructuring Advisory LLP were appointed as Joint Administrators of Kingfisher Industrial Management Limited on October 9, 2017."

Report of dealing near to school

AN investigation has been launched after reports of drug dealing near a school.

Haybridge High School in Hagley confirmed that an incident took place outside of school hours and off the premises. A spokesperson for the 1,276-pupil school said: "There is an ongoing school investigation, following correct procedure, and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this time. We would like to reassure all students, staff and parents/carers that the safety and wellbeing of our students remains our top priority."

New store includes post office services

THE Co-op has opened its latest food store in Worcester Road, Hagley, following a £500,000 investment creating 14 jobs.

The store, which offers Post Office services throughout its opening hours of 6am to 10pm, includes an in-store bakery alongside its range of fresh foods, award-winning wines, Costa coffee and food-to-go. The store also brings a boost for local good causes via the Co-op's membership scheme.

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Family meals are 'rare occasions'

FAMILIES in the West Midlands are being urged to spend more meal times together after research found they barely spent more than once a week together.

Furniture and flooring firm SCS commissioned a study which has found that one in five families sit down to eat together less than once a week.

The study of 1,000 parents found two out of three families don't sit together to eat every night with 13 per cent saying they only sit around the same table for special occasions. Long or late working hours were often blamed.

Gig donations help Charlie book costs

MUSIC acts and performers will be taking to the stage for a fundraising gig with a Black Country flavour on Saturday in Langley.

Brian Dakin, whose goes by the stage name Billy Spakemon, is showcasing acts from his Omma N Chain radio show at the Zion Reform Church Hall, in Langley Green Road, Langley, from 1 to 4pm in a free admission concert.

The Buskin' For Charlie event will be raising funds for a book Billy is writing on the life of Halesowen cartoonist Charlie Grigg, who drew famous comic characters including Desperate Dan and Korky the Cat.

Grandparents do even more to help

THE extent of grandparents providing childcare in is much higher than previously thought and is a factor in assisting mums, who had taken time out from work to have children, to get back into the workplace, according to new research carried out at the University of Birmingham.

The study in the Journal of Social Policy, found grandparents were the first named source of after school and weekend care for 36 per cent of school entry year children for lone parents.

Satriani joins guitar greats for a super-jam

GUITAR virtuoso Joe Satriani will entertain fans in Birmingham next year.

The American rock icon, aged 61, will play alongside former Scorpions' guitarist Uli Jon Roth and Dream Theater guitarist John Petrucci. Each will perform their own set, followed by a massive jam at the end of the show.

The G3 concert will be at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on April 30.

Restoration of loco is steaming ahead

THE restoration of a steam locomotive which was once based at Stourbridge has taken a big step forward.

The locomotive No. 4150, a Great Western Railway 'Large Prairie' tank engine, was built at the GWR workshops in Swindon, but was based in Stourbridge for six years from the summer of 1947.

Now it has had its boiler removed ready for overhaul and the installation

of newly-fabricated tanks and bunker – in hope of getting back into action on the Severn Valley heritage line.

During its time at Stourbridge, the engine worked passenger and goods trains to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stafford and Worcester, and along the Severn Valley line through Bewdley where the boiler lift took place.

Owners of the loco are The 4150 Fund, a group of hundreds of steam

enthusiasts, many in the Stourbridge area who have bought shares in the engine.

A spokesman said: "The fact that the panels and parts fitted perfectly onto the locomotive's frames was due in no small measure to the quality of the work done by local firms, with a special mention for Accurate Section Benders of Kingswinford and BB Price Engineering of Halesowen."



Locomotive No. 4150 being restored

Food mountain boost for Christmas appeal



THE Feed A Family This Christmas appeal has been given a huge boost, thanks to an anonymous donation of more than 1,200 items.

Hundreds of tins of soup, vegetables, meat and fish have been handed over to the appeal run by The Chronicle's sister daily the Express & Star, as well as dozens of bags of pasta, rice, noodles, snacks and biscuits. Baby food and cereal also make up the massive donation of 1,240 items, which filled three cars when it was collected.

It has been given to the appeal by a Staffordshire community association which wanted the food to help struggling families in the run-up to the festive season.

The food will be now be distributed along with other donations to food banks and other charitable organisations across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

The anonymous donation includes 60 packets of cereals, 100 tins of soup, 250 tins of beans, 60 packets of dry pasta and sauce, 40 packets of biscuits, 40 packet sauces and 100 tins of tomatoes.

Charities

There are also 50 tins of meat, 100 tins of vegetables, 100 tins of fish, 40 packets of snacks, 70 packets of tea bags, 30 assorted baby foods, 100 packets of pasta, 60 packets of dry and microwaveable packets of rice and 40 packets of noodles.

Among the charities being helped is the Black Country Food Bank, which has centres across Dudley.

Group head of weekly titles Diane Davies said: "This is an absolutely amazing contribution, we are incredibly grateful. It has really got the Feed a



Reporters Jordan Harris and Heather Large with helper Phil Beecher and the huge amount of donated food

Family campaign off to a flying start. What a fantastic, kind-hearted gesture.

"But I can't emphasise enough how much pressure there is on food banks and homelessness charities at this time. We really want to help the families in our communities, particularly over Christmas. So I would urge all our readers to support this campaign, even if it's just with one tin of beans, so we can bring a little Christmas cheer to those who really need it."

Former Emmerdale star Lisa Riley, who will

be appearing in Jack and The Beanstalk at Wolverhampton Grand, and Stourbridge antiques expert Will Farmer, have already backed our campaign, which is running until December 16.

Drop-off points are: Express & Star Wolverhampton, 51-53 Queen Street, WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock WS11 1EA; Oldbury office: Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury, B69 2DG; and there is a drop-off box for donations at Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, WV2 4NJ.

Sixth form college no longer rated 'outstanding'

A PRESTIGIOUS Black Country sixth form college has lost its 'outstanding' rating following an inspection by the education watchdog.

King Edward VI in Stourbridge was downgraded from 'outstanding' to 'good' by Ofsted after an inspection on October 3. But the college was praised by inspectors for its 'high ambitions for students who arrive promptly and readily to learn'.

The report highlighted how 'too many of the most able students did not achieve the grades they were capable of, despite the actions of leaders and managers'.

It also stated: "Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a very strong understanding of the requirements of the A-level course and assessments. Teachers prepare students well for the examinations."

"Teachers support students well to develop independent learning skills. Students have the confidence and skills to learn effectively inside the classroom and are well prepared for higher education."

"Students' attendance is high. They arrive promptly and ready to learn. They make good progress in a broad range of personal and social skills."

Ofsted highlighted room for improvements, stating: "Senior managers do not provide sufficient support for students who wish to progress directly into employment and training."

"Students do not understand British values well enough."

King Edward VI had 2,116 students, aged 16 to 18, studying at the college at the time of inspection.

Special brew for Darby monument

A BREWERY is raising money toward a project to create a monument in memory of a pioneer of the industrial revolution in Dudley.

Holden's Brewery in Woodsetton is bringing out a special beer with 10 per cent of sales being donated to the Abraham Darby First Project Fund.

The fund is behind a monument for the Woodsetton area in tribute to 17th century iron founder Darby. From a Woodsetton Quaker family, Darby developed a method of producing pig iron in a blast furnace fuelled by coke rather than charcoal, which fuelled the Industrial Revolution. His grandson commissioned the famous Iron Bridge in Shropshire.

The label for the beer is being designed by borough artist Steve Field, with a design for the monument.

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Axed market will return run by new operators

A STREET market will return to Stourbridge after new operators were found.

Tudor Markets will bring stalls back to Stourbridge from March and a Christmas Market for the town by the firm which also runs Dudley Market.

The market closed in September after former bosses LSD said they could not continue to run it following a change in policy by Dudley Council, which they say amounted to a 850 per cent rise.

Natalie Mashhadi-Marshall, business developer for Tudor Markets, said: "We aim to give Stourbridge the best experience possible and we want to let people know that we will be bringing it back with an official launch in March. We are in the initial stages of planning but we know that having the market come back means the world to the people of Stourbridge. We want it to be the focal point of the town centre again."

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, licensing boss, said: "People have been coming to Stourbridge for a market for many years and we recognised the importance of doing everything we could to continue that popular tradition, especially in the lead up to Christmas."

"We will have a traditional market in the town as part of the Christmas light switch-on, and markets throughout the festive period."

Dead mouse in school kitchen

A PRIMARY school closed its kitchen after environmental health officers found a dead mouse and droppings.

The discovery was made at Priory Primary School in Dudley following a visit by the health team from Dudley Council. The kitchen was closed after the visit on November 3 but it was anticipated that it would re-open last Friday.

Jill Craig, headteacher, said: "I would like to reassure parents that we are taking the necessary action to address concerns raised by environmental health." Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member for health and well-being, said: "We are working with the school, which is putting the necessary measures in place to resolve the issue as quickly as possible."

Pub help Pudsey

CRADLEY Heath pub The Waggon and Horses is holding a free admission event to raise money for Children in Need on Saturday, including barbecue and music, from 2pm.

Badgers stop play as pitch dug up



Badger bother – The Dell stadium

BADGERS have stopped play at a Black Country football club after digging up the pitch.

Dudley Town FC's home games last Saturday and Wednesday night were cancelled after the animals had chewed the turf at The Dell Stadium in Brierley Hill.

Officials declared the surface as unplayable, saying that the problem had been going on for the past 10 weeks.

Last Saturday's match against Hereford-based Wellington FC in the West Midlands League was called off after a 10am pitch inspection. The

same happened again with Malvern Town on Wednesday night.

Dudley Town chairman Stephen Austin, explained: "We have never experienced anything like this before. We have had problems with Canadian geese and foxes but we have lost our last games as a result of the damage it has caused."

"It's been ongoing for about 10 weeks but has progressively got worse. They are a protected species so there is little that we can do, but the council are working tirelessly."

"We have been trying to look for

other local places we can play but it's not that easy. It is concerning that the games have been called off but we hope the matter will resolve itself."

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: "We are having problems with badgers, who are digging into the surface of the pitch at the Dell to get at earthworms and other insect larvae and causing damage. Badgers are a wild animal and as such are protected by law, but we are making every effort to protect the pitch, including strengthening and securing fencing."

Reckless pair's race cost young mother her life

DANGEROUS drivers who killed a young mother during a race at almost 80mph have been jailed for a total of 14 years.

Joseph Chance and Dylan Stringer have been locked up for the fatal crash which killed 19-year-old Nadine Foster.

Former Dudley College student Miss Foster, 18, was a front seat passenger in a Ford Focus, driven by boyfriend Stringer, when it hurtled into a bus shelter and wall in Hagley Road, Stourbridge.



Nadine Foster – died aged 19

The former Pedmore Technology College student died in hospital four days after last year's tragedy, leaving behind her then five-month-old son.

Sentencing the two at Wolverhampton Crown Court, Judge Michael Challinor condemned them for driving without insurance

and licences after swigging alcohol.

He handed Chance, 25, of Murcroft Road, Stourbridge, an eight-year prison term and jailed Stringer, of Wychbury Road, Stourbridge, for six years.

The judge said: "Long after you are released, the catastrophic effects of what you have done will continue to echo down the years for the family of Nadine Foster."

Chance previously admitted driving dangerously and denied causing Miss Foster's death but was unanimously convicted by jurors last month, while Stringer pleaded guilty in January.

Jurors heard the men were with Miss Foster and Chance's ex-girlfriend in the Chicago Rock Cafe before leaving just after midnight on April 16., 2016.



Dylan Stringer – put behind bars for 13 years

Chance was driving his Renault Clio ahead of Stringer's car as they both flouted the 30mph speed limit and overtook another vehicle on Hagley Road. There were just two seconds between the cars as they reached 78mph before Stringer's vehicle crashed.

Stringer had lost control of his car when he swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle as he tried to overtake a car. Chance had completed the same manoeuvre just moments before.

Ban

Witnesses described seeing the cars 'racing' immediately before the crash.

Chance was handed a 14-year driving ban and Stringer, 24, was disqualified from driving for 13 years.

Nadine was left with catastrophic injuries after the passenger side of Stringer's car, where hNadine was sitting, took the brunt of the crash.

Chance had blamed Nadine for distracting him



Joseph Chance – jailed for eight years

by pinching his leg and causing the collision. He later refused to be interviewed.

Judge Challinor told the men they were equally culpable for the crash, with Chance setting the pace for a race.

Chance, 25, who had a provisional licence but no insurance and MOT, was found guilty of death by dangerous driving. Stringer, 24, who had no licence, no insurance and no MOT, admitted death by dangerous driving.

DC Jamie Simon, said: from West Midlands Police's Collision Investigation Unit, said: "Chance and Stringer chose to race their vehicles at more than double the speed limit, having both consumed alcohol, at the time it was dark and it had been raining. They did this with a blatant disregard for the laws of the road"

"Their reckless and stupid actions cost a young mother her life."

"Her son, who was five months old at the time, will know never get to know his mother."

Tree and lights switch-on date

THE bosses of Dudley Market will be staging a Christmas lights switch-on in the town centre on December 2. Tudor Markets will light up the stalls and a Christmas tree will be brought back into the market place.

There are 63 traders at the market now, six days a week.

Natalie Mashhadi-Marshall, business developer, said: "Things are going really well. There has been a huge increase in traders since we took it over and the council seem happy with us. We will also be bringing a Christmas tree back to the town centre, which we will sponsor, and will be having a light switch on December 2."

Council investigate after man trapped

AN investigation into an incident which saw a man buried under a pile of refrigerated goods in a warehouse has been launched by Dudley Council.

A spokesman confirmed the local authority is investigating the accident which saw a four-hour rescue operation take place to free a 54-year-old worker at Central Supplies in Saltbrook Road, Cradley.

The worker and the forklift he was driving were buried under piles of goods. Fire crews launched a rescue operation to free the man, who was treated in hospital.

Business award for dance school

A DANCE school run by 27-year-old Kennedy Glews has won Outstanding Business of the Year at the Midland Business and Community Charity Awards.

The University of Wolverhampton student won praise for her The Kennedy School of Dance. Ms Glews, of Kingswinford, who has owned the school for four years, said: "I've owned the dance school for four years now and we have 150 students of all ages, teaching tap, acro and modern dance. I work with an amazing team and they all work very hard."

Chance to meet Green Duck brewer at pub

A WORDSLEY pub is holding a meet the brewer night.

Head brewer of Stourbridge's Green Duck Beer Company, Alex Hill, will be at the Lawnswood in Lawnswood Road tomorrow night (Friday).

He will be talking about the brewery and how its wide range of ales are made.

There will be a chance to try four Green Duck beers including Winter Berry Stout.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Pay rise? I shouldn't get your hopes up

HERE'S something to give you a warm glow on these bitter, cold mornings. Next year we will all get bumper pay rises.

How do I know? The governor of the Bank of England says so. A report by Mark Carney says pay rises next year will be "clustered around 2.5 to 3.5 per cent".

The obvious question is how can he possibly know this?

If the figure had been produced by Kim Jong Un, it might have carried a bit of weight. After all, he and his cronies are the ones who decide how much everybody in North Korea gets paid. Although I suspect in North Korea, "clustered around 2.5 to 3.5 per cent" probably means "500 per cent for Kim Jong Un and an extra bowl of rice for everyone else."

Mark Carney, though, has no control whatsoever over the pay rises people get. About the only influence he has is chairing a committee which meets occasionally to set interest rates.

His forecast is based on a survey of major employers, but I really don't think chatting to a few captains of industry represents the 4.6 million people in the UK who are self-employed. Or the 60 per cent who work for small and medium-sized businesses.

Mr Carney, you might remember, predicted instant economic meltdown if Britain voted to leave the EU. Well that was 17 months ago and we're still waiting. And of course, the pollsters forecast a comfortable referendum victory for Remain, an easy win for Hillary Clinton, and a landslide for the Conservatives in the summer. Probably best not to spend that pay rise yet, then.

□ □ □

JUST when you think you have heard it all, Highways England is now carrying out an experiment with traffic lights on the motorway, where the M6 meets the M62 in Cheshire. This is on top of the regular 40mph speed limits we have all become accustomed to along the M6. Why not just stick a few speed humps in and be done with it?

□ □ □

MEANWHILE, 22-year-old university graduate Eddie Ledsham has quit as a trainee teacher, saying he was left "crying his eyes out" by the workload. His grievances include not getting home until 6.30pm, working through lunch, and thinking about work while on the train.

He also said his colleagues criticised him when he did wrong, but didn't praise him when he got things right.

And they wonder what we mean by "generation snowflake".

More rockets in explosive week at parliament



Chris Grayling, surely on the wrong track when looking at the future of transport



Michael Fallon, whose fall from grace sparked the media's use of an archaic saying



Yorkshire vet Julian Norton, as seen on Channel 5, with dog slobbering highlighted

When fireworks fun sparks elderly fears

A READER in her 80s who suffers from an irregular heartbeat describes her local bonfire night as "every bit as frightening as the bombings over my home town in the 1940s... screaming rockets soaring noisily above my garden and then exploding with such force the front window shook... little dogs screaming in terror, my heart fast and painful."

NOW, you may think comparing Bonfire Night with the Blitz is over the top. But I remember interviewing an old chap in Birmingham whose nightly ritual at this time of year was to build his own little air-raid shelter under the kitchen table where he cocooned himself and his dog against the detonations of other folks' fun. He, too, compared Bonfire night to the war. Simple question: in the name of having a good time, how much of a thoroughly bad time are we prepared to inflict on others?

"WE'VE seen nothing in our lifetime that can compare with the motoring revolution that's just around the corner." So says Transport Secretary Chris Grayling on the advent of driverless cars. And yet there's one massive transport revolution happening that no-one in Whitehall seems to want to see. It is a train in a tube called Hyperloop which its Los Angeles makers claim will cruise at 600 mph. Meanwhile Britain is plodding ahead with HS2, an unaffordable £100 billion exercise in using 20th century technology to update a 19th century concept to serve 21st century commuters.

AFTER taking up cudgels and leaving some-

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



one in the lurch, here's another ancient expression that's long overdue for modernising. When Michael Knee-Toucher Fallon was sacked as defence secretary, the media agreed his was the first scalp in Westminster's sex scandal. Scalp? For goodness' sake, how long is it since American Indians gave up scalping people?

AS Parliament agonises about the latest rash of sex scandals, one reader wants to make the point that not all victims of sexual assault are scarred for life. As an airman in the RAF at the age of 19 and 20, he was regularly stripped and groped by about a dozen older women at the local laundry. Far from complaining, he recalls it was "rather empowering, being an object of lust or desire." No wonder some blokes recall National Service so fondly. The key word in all this, of course, is consent. By coincidence, another male reader writes to say he's still traumatised by the "initiation" he suffered as an apprentice at an engineering works in the Black Country, courtesy of the women from the machine shop. They stripped him and smeared his nether regions with engineering grease. He recalls nothing but "anguish, pain and suffering."

THERE'S a modern trend for couples to combine their surnames when marrying, sometimes

to preserve the bride's maiden name and sometimes just to look posh. But there are risks. A Daily Telegraph reader recalls a couple who, despite the urgings of their friends, declined to become double-barrelled. Which is perhaps as well. She is Carr and he is Parkin.

THE Yorkshire Vet (C5) introduced us to a particularly revolting habit - kissing pets. A woman repeatedly allowed her dog to lick her on the mouth. Do these owners never watch what their pets are up to? As they snog their cats and dogs in full view of the rest of us, do they ask themselves what was the last thing the animal was licking?

IN one of those little annual rituals that barely gets a mention in the media, bellringers all over England have been preparing for this sacred weekend of remembrance by fitting leather pads and straps to the clappers of their great bronze bells. This creates what is known as the "half-muffled" effect. If you ever wondered why the bells sound different on Remembrance Sunday, that's why.

THE timing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, was down to fate. Another victory or defeat on the Western Front could have brought the ceasefire forward to spring or pushed it back to mid-winter. As it is, remembrance sits very well with mid-November. The chilly closing-down of the year reflects the sad drawing-down of blinds in bereaved households. It wouldn't be the same if we gathered at the war memorial in shorts and T-shirts..

TALKING POINT



Bus travel: I just want to be left in peace

AS a regular bus user, my other half just loves to hear my tales of the daily journey to and from work (!).

Every day, she awaits my boring conversations like... "So this bloke sitting next to me said..." or "You know that woman on the bus?"

Like the time I waited more than an hour for the 154, but a 59, 89 and number 6 turned up and I calculated I could have caught all three of those instead. Mind you, I always bore her anyway.

But I digress. There is a serious side to this point. Remember Doug Paulley? He is the wheelchair user who, more than a year ago, opened a can of public transport worms.

The pensioner won a landmark Supreme Court case allowing bus companies to ask non-disabled passengers to vacate in favour of wheelchair users. He had begun his fight five years previously when he was left at a bus stop as a mother with a buggy refused to budge.

The ruling sparked a wheelchair versus buggies debate. Who warrants space? Who is the most needy?

Often we hear of passengers refusing to give up their seat for the elderly, or for pregnant women. My own view, is that in a day and age when many buses are full of mod-cons, like digital stop displays, CCTV, wi-fi and charging points, surely there is room for wheelchair users and buggies alike.

Many drivers have refused to get involved, saying they have enough to contend with keeping to routes and times and ensuring people pay.

Meanwhile, passengers, are told to 'see something, say something'. Very admirable, and of course if there is a serious incident, one would like to think that people wouldn't just sit in silence.

However, many of us just want to sit in peace, read the paper, listen to music and not disturb others. So, to that end, I have made my own list of what would make my bus journey more pleasurable.

Have money ready before boarding the bus and don't fiddle about looking for change when you step on; put the paper back in the rack, please; take rubbish with you instead of leaving papers shoved down the side of seats and bottles and cans rolling around; more importantly, I may appreciate your music, but you don't have to share it with me. Turn it down!

Oh, and why do some people insist on sitting by the aisle seat with their bags on the window seat next to them? Just budge over, for heavens sake.

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Auction shows council incompetence

THE Brooke Robinson auction is yet more disturbing evidence of incompetence and lack of planning on Dudley Council's part.

First, against widespread opposition, they move the museum away from a place where people are likely to visit to a remote out-of-town location. Then they discover the Brooke Robinson Collection has to stay where it is, due to the terms of its bequest.

Then they find that despite immense storage capacity at the £7 million archives building they can't find room for the collection's items. So the solution is to sell off the most valuable items – but then buy new ones to

replace them. Councillor Kettle's assertion that Dudley won't spend anything on the sale is very misleading – what about all the staff and legal services' time spent liaising with the Brooke Robinson trustees over the sale?

They now have a building in the town centre that was supposed to be sold after the museum moved out... now they can't and they want to display the Brooke Robinson collection in the town centre. So why close and move the museum in the first place?

MARTIN JONES
Sedgley

Their wives deserve a medal too

WE have read much of the bravery and dedication of our armed forces, home guard, munitions workers and others during WWII but I have never seen mentioned the wives of servicemen.

These women were left to raise children whilst subject to bombing and not knowing whether their husbands were alive or dead. They had to exist on a soldier's pay whilst some in protected occupations were striking for more money and feeding a black market.

In 1940, with father in the Army, my mother had four children under the age of 13, had three jobs and still managed to clothe, feed and spend valuable time with us.

God knows how she managed and stayed sane, but if anyone deserved a medal she and the women like her did.

BRIAN OSBORNE
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Time for a new EU vote, without deceit

THE realities of Brexit are coming to the fore. Should one wonder why when the vote to leave was based on emotional visions sensationalising unproven concerns. Images of hordes of immigrants were used to maximum effect.

That the UK could take control of its own economic destiny, without the restraints of the EU, is proving to be a monumental error. Many leading corporations, economists, the EU itself, take a very pessimistic view of that ability, in the words of another Brexit slogan, 'To go it alone'. What is shameful is that large sections of the public were swayed to leave based upon falsehoods. Is it not time to hold another referendum based on reality and not deceit?

EDWARD DAVIES
Stourbridge

Government allowing a Paradise for tax evaders

THE 'Paradise papers' reveal the contempt with which the Tory government and their wealthy financial backers view the working class folk in our country.

The Government continues to 'legalise' tax evasion in the guise of 'tax avoidance', providing a framework within which it can work.

If a burglar stole your property, then produced a code of practice for burglary, would that absolve him from his crime? Of course not!

These people are stealing millions from our pockets. For every penny they take out, we have to put one back in.

It is time the Government got tough with tax dodgers. If they decide to continue with this sham, we must remove them from power at the earliest opportunity.

MICHAEL CLIFF
Wall Heath

Keep walkies in the garden

I WAS sorry to read of the recent attack on Jill Boddy's dog (Chronicle Letters, November 9), but I must point out that it is very unlikely that any person's dog would be attacked if walked around an owner's rear garden.

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Firm thrills as order book hits £30m mark

SOARING demand for a Kingswinford company's hi-tech theme park rides has boosted its order book to £30 million.

Orders have trebled this year at Simworx, on the Pen-snett Estate, as it comes up with rides like its Immersive Tunnel that uses a 360-degree 3D screen up to 70 metres long with 4D effects such as water sprays and bubbles.

This year it has created an F1 racing experience at the Ferrari Land theme park at PortAventura World, near Salou in Spain, and the Kung Fu Panda Ride at Motion Gate in Dubai.

Simworx is receiving orders from China, Russia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Mexico for its 4D/5D effects theatres, 3D audio visuals and immersive experiences. It already supplies its technologically advanced rides to Drayton Manor Theme Park in Staffordshire, also Thorpe Park, Paulsons Park and Shrek's Adventure.

Simworx's latest orders include a flying theatre for Hanoi in Vietnam – a ride that lifts seated visitors into a huge dome screen and gives them the sensation that they are flying. It has

By Simon Penfold

an order from an Indonesian theme park called Trans Studios to create the world's first media-based water ride by adding 3D audio visuals to a water flume ride. Now Simworx has signed a £46m strategic co-operation agreement with a major theme park developer in China to build three new rides a year for the next four years.

Terry Monkton, managing director, said: "I am thrilled with the recent growth in the business and the quantity of new orders we are receiving from international markets."

A £4.5m funding boost from the British Growth Fund enabled it to double the size of its factory and recruit more staff.

Tributes after sudden death of gardener, 27



Gardener Adam Greathead from Stourbridge was an inspiration to many with his skills and charity fundraising

ADAM Greathead was a natural gardener. He started his first allotment aged just 11 and began a business selling hanging baskets and plants at school.

His death aged 27 at his home on October 29 has shocked the community. An inquest is to be held. He was chairman of Wollaston Gardeners Guild, before that secretary of the West Midlands branch of the National Vegetable Society.

But he may be remembered for the gardens he created. One was a public garden called Duck's Pool in Stourbridge, which opened to raise money for charity. The other was John's Garden, the garden of Ashwood Nurseries owner John Massey, who appointed him as head gardener. An extension to that garden will be renamed Adam's Garden and will host charity events. The three-acre site behind the nurseries in Kingswinford, will open on February 10.

Promising

Mr Massey said: "There can be no doubt that Adam had the most promising future ahead of him and his death is the cruellest of blows, not only to me and the Ashwood team but to the world of horticulture. "We offer our deepest sympathy to his parents, John and Gay. Their loss is unimaginable."

Adam, who attended Hagley Catholic High School, was awarded the Princess Diana Memorial Award in 2005 for inspiring others. His funeral will take place at Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Church in New Road, Stourbridge, on November 30, at 11am.

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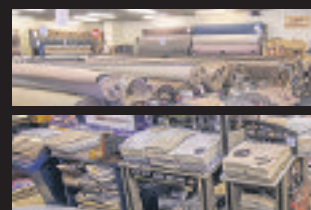
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Designer outlet to create 2,000 jobs

A DESIGNER outlet shopping centre that promises to create 2,000 jobs and attract £200 million of investment is being lined up for the Black Country.

The new 200,000 sq ft centre could be built on Lion Farm playing fields, just off Junction 2 of the M5 in Oldbury. It would feature top brand shops as well as cafes and restaurants.

Sports pitches would also be built nearby as part of the deal, part funded by Birmingham-based developer Jeremy Knight-Adams.

It is believed the additional jobs would represent a two per cent increase in employment in Sandwell while the development would bring a £200m investment to the area. As well as generating permanent employment, once complete, several hundred jobs would also be created or supported during the construction phase.

The development was first mooted in 2012 when an option agreement was made between the developer and Sandwell Council over the land. Sandwell Council's cabinet members were deciding yesterday (Wednesday) whether to grant the developer extra time to work on the proposals.

A full planning application could be submitted by autumn 2018.

Killer comedy to mark am-dram milestone



Lee Morgan-Salcombe, Carey Esthop and David Laverder in *The Ladykillers*, staged this week

THEY'VE been treading the boards for 70 years and now an am-dram group in Stourbridge is marking the milestone with a production of comedy thriller *The Ladykillers* this week.

Members of Envile Street Dramatic Society are launching a special 70th anniversary season with the play based on a classic 1950s British film which starred Alec Guinness and Peter Sellers.

The company was founded in 1947 by members of Envile Street Methodist Church. Neville Mole, an original member and now aged in his 90s, is still connected with the group as patron and committee member. He still attends as many performances as he can. His late wife Beryl and late daughter Angela were both members, as are his daughters Lin, Jane and Carey and grandchildren Sarah (now professional actress Sarah Thom), Tom and Becky.

Feature

Carey, Tom and Becky will all feature in *The Ladykillers* with Carey as Mrs Wilberforce, the elderly landlady who unwittingly rents a room to a dangerous gang of criminals.

The black comedy opened at Amblecote Holy Trinity Church Hall in Vicarage Road last night (Wednesday) and continues to Saturday, when there is a 2.30pm matinee as well as 7.30pm performance. Tickets can be bought on the door or in advance on (01384) 356 600 or 07941 906 069, or via envillestreetdramatic.org.uk website.

German market opens

ONE of the largest Christmas markets in the UK returns to Birmingham from today (Thursday).

The Frankfurt Christmas Market, centred on Victoria Square, begins its five week festive stay in the city centre.

It will be opened by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Anne Underwood, who will also switch on the city's festive lights.

The Frankfurt Christmas Market – which celebrates its 18th year in the city – is organised by Birmingham City Council in partnership with Frankfurt Tourism and Congress GmBH, and sponsored by Fortem.

Concrete security barriers have been installed, following the attack on a Christmas market in Berlin last year. There will also be an increased police presence.

Sight-loss charity's lottery raises more than £150,000

A CHARITY for the blind and partially-sighted is celebrating after its lottery initiative, started 13 years ago, passed the £150,000 mark.

The funding for Beacon Centre for the Blind helps people in the Black Country with sight-loss.

Vikki Millichamp, communications and fundraising manager, said: "We

are incredibly grateful to the generous support from our local community."

The Beacon Centre is in Sedgley and provides support and advice to visually impaired people across the Black Country. That is an area with more than 36,000 people living with sight loss – and this figure is predicted to double to some 72,000 by 2050.

The lottery, called the Galden Gate Superdraw, sees people pay

£1 per week. The profit goes to the charity. Vikki added: "The Galden Gate Superdraw is a fantastic way to support our charity while being in with a chance of winning one of 60 cash prizes every week. They have 10 chances of winning and each week one lucky player wins the top prize of £1,000."

For more information call 01902 880 111 or visit beaconvision.org

Bedsits proposal for a former pub

A FORMER pub could be turned into 17 bedsits. But the proposals for the Red Cow, in Edge Street, Coseley, have raised concerns for a councillor.

Coseley East ward councillor Star Anderton said she feared the plans could also bring 'trouble to the neighbourhood' and 'anti-social behaviour'.

She said: "I don't think people will be best impressed. They might feel 17 is too much on one site."

The plans would see the former pub turned into 17 separate units as part of a larger house.

The apartments would be spread across the ground and first floor, while the building would also be extended to create more space. The plans have been submitted to Dudley Council and will be looked at planning bosses.

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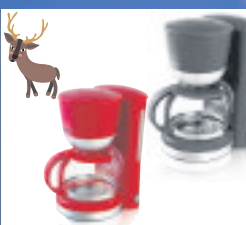
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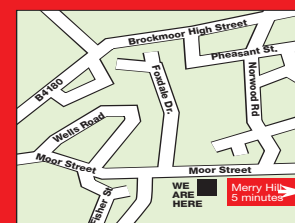
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Young Arwen gets the royal stamp of approval



Making her mark – schoolgirl Arwen Wilson, aged nine, from Dudley, with Prince Charles and Ted Lewis-Clark, 10

A SCHOOLGIRL from Dudley met Prince Charles to mark her success in a Christmas stamp design contest.

Arwen Wilson, from Dudley, created the snow people scene which is to feature on the 2nd class stamp this festive season.

Arwen's artwork will be on millions of Christmas card envelopes.

The St Chad's Catholic Primary pupil entered the Royal Mail competition. Her entry was chosen by Prince Charles and approved by the Queen.

The nine-year-old met the heir to the throne and was presented with a framed copy of her stamp – Snow Family.

The 1st class stamp will use a design by fellow winner Ted Lewis-Clark from Somerset.

A special postmark will also feature. Each child will have their name on the postmark for a week this month. Arwen's postmark will feature on mail delivered from Tuesday this week.

She won £1,000 in vouchers and £1,000 for her school.



Arwen Wilson's winning

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16 One in ten 101 calls go unanswered

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, November 16, 2017

ONE in 10 calls to the non-emergency police helpline 101 are going unanswered, it has been revealed.

Ten per cent of callers trying to access help from West Midlands Police are hanging up because they are waiting too long. It has led to concerns that those whose calls are not answered are then ringing 999, piling pressure on emergency call handlers who have had to deal with a rise in calls compared to last year.

Calls to 999 rose by 12.5 per cent during 2017, with demand reaching an all-time high during June when each weekend broke previous records for calls during a 24-hour period. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services also criticised the force for 'abandoned calls' in their report released last week, stating their understanding of demand 'requires improvement' although efficiency was rated 'good' overall.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson admitted it was a challenging time for call handlers. He said: "I have focused on improving this area, so the public gets a quicker response to their calls.

"There is still much to do but the initial signs are encouraging.

"West Midlands Police has faced an extraordinary rise in demand that has placed huge pressures on the service."

Gig to get to know Howard well again

EIGHTIES pop star Howard Jones will perform in Birmingham later this month, with his Electric Band.

The Live Aid veteran plays the O2 Institute in Digbeth, on Saturday, November 25. Visit www.academymusicgroup.com/o2institutebirmingham for details. He has a 'best of' album out including hits Like To Get To Known You Well and What Is Love?

Bring back the Black Country speed cameras – police chief

Sue's Brazil adventure for charity



Sue Harris, aged 68, with her challenge medal after completing an epic cycle ride in Brazil – India is next

A 68-year-old cyclist is on cloud nine after pedalling 217 miles around Brazil in just five days.

Sue Harris, from Lye, was inspired to take on the challenge after she was stuck in bed with a broken ankle.

The only problem was she had not

been on a bike for more than 20 years. But the retired accounts worker refused to let that hold her back and after months of training jetted off to South America last month.

She successfully completed the ride, which included some mountains, rais-

ing £4,500 for Women V Cancer, which supports Breast Cancer Care, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust and Ovarian Cancer Action.

"It was an absolutely amazing experience," said Mrs Harris, now planning a 450km ride in India next November.

SPEED cameras should return to the Black Country, a police chief has said as he praised their use in other parts of the West Midlands for reducing the number of road deaths.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson believes it is crucial working cameras are installed in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell to ensure drivers stick to the speed limit. Speeds have fallen by 14 per cent on roads where average speed cameras have been rolled out in Birmingham and Solihull.

They were introduced in August 2016 as part of a 21-month trial and are now due to be brought in in Coventry.

Mr Jamieson said there was clear evidence the average speed cameras had made drivers slow down and says they should now be introduced in the Black Country.

Decision

It comes as it was revealed the number of deaths on the region's roads had fallen by nine per cent over the last 12 months.

A total of 706 people were killed in road collisions in the year to September. The decision to put up speed cameras must be made by councils rather than the police.

Mr Jamieson said: "When elected I promised to make our roads safer. I am proud that thanks to a concerted effort we are reducing the number of pedestrian deaths on our roads, compared to large national increases.

"A focus on cyclist safety and speed cameras in Birmingham and Solihull has contributed to this. Cameras are due to be installed in Coventry and I am hoping the roll-out will extend to the Black Country in the near future."

Show sparks paramedic job interest

MORE than 20,000 people showed an interest in a paramedic recruitment campaign.

Since the application opened on NHS Jobs, just over 21,000 people have viewed the West Midlands Ambulance job description and person specification documents.

There have been more than 450 applications, with another 850 still working on their online forms. Last December, a similar advert brought in 10,000 views and 28 applications.

Louise Harris, recruitment manager, said: "After the success of TV programmes like Ambulance on BBC One, 999 On The Frontline on More 4 and Inside the Ambulance on W Channel, the ambulance service, particularly in the West Midlands, has never been so high profile.

"There is no doubt we have seen a huge level of interest in the role of paramedic."

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Black Country roots help Plant carry on with fire

HE is a regular face at Molineux and he could never be accused of forgetting his Black Country roots.

"I had two cats when I first got my current home, 26 years ago, and I called them Tipton and Dudley. They miaowed with a Black Country accent."

In an interview with Uncut magazine, the West Bromwich-born rock legend spoke at length about his early life in the Black Country and his continued association with the region.

Last month he released a new solo album, titled Carry Fire, and he is soon to play for fans at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall and the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Asked about persistent references to the seasons in his new album, Plant said: "I live in the seasons. I live on the edge of the great industrial swirl of the wondrous Black Country."



The former Led Zeppelin front man turns 70 next year

Impressive

"But I can dive in there and enjoy the greatest tribe of people on the planet or just head west."

"I can actually meld, bit by bit, into what the physicality or the silence or the bustle or the clutter offers me."

Plant, who lives near Kidderminster, is of course famed for being the front man of Led Zeppelin but he has now racked up an impressive 11 solo albums dating back to 1982. Next year he turns 70 and 2018 will also be the 50th anniversary of the legendary band. In the magazine interview Plant, was asked about the tower block photograph on the back of Led Zep IV.

He said: "It's in Winson Green. There were two towers blocks in Dudley and John Bonham lived in one of them. It looked just like that. He made



Plant with Tiswas presenter Sally James

the mistake of buying a second-hand Rolls-Royce and parking it at the bottom of the council tower block.

"So every morning he came down it had been keyed . . . and keyed . . . and keyed. I said 'what's the odd thing out

in the whole of Dudley? It's your car!'"

Over the years, Plant has found himself in some pretty unusual situations, not least an appearance on Saturday morning television show Tiswas, when he was doused in water.

Asked how he will celebrate his 70th birthday next year, he said: "When I was 60, I had a night of humour with my friends at the village pub. Frank Carson and Tommy Mundon, the Black Country comedian, were the stars."

"Neither of them are with us any longer, but everyone remembers how they laughed."

"So, 70, is it important? No. Not as long as I can keep my brain in shape and parts of my body."

Plant's sell out tour sees him laying his home-coming gig at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Monday.



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Reports of hate crimes rise by nearly 30pc – in a year

REPORTS of hate crimes across the West Midlands rose by nearly 30 per cent during the last financial year, police chiefs have revealed. Around 4,000 attacks were reported during 2016/17 – a rise of 29 per cent compared to 12 months earlier.

West Midlands Police Assistant Chief Constable, Alex Murray, said the force witnessed more hate crimes in the wake of terror attacks and during summer months. He added that only around one-in-five incidents reported led to a conviction, but that the force had a 90 per cent conviction rate when it had enough evidence to bring charges.

Flu fear – no free jab for police

POLICE officers and staff in the West Midlands will not be offered the flu jab, despite fears of a possible epidemic this winter.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said vaccinating staff had not had a major impact in the past.

Hospital staff across the Black Country are being encouraged to get the jab in a bid to ensure the workforce is not struck down by illness over the winter.

Mr Thompson responded to a question from Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson at the latest Strategic Police and Crime Board meeting, who asked if there would be a 'three-line whip' forcing staff to get the jab. But Mr Thompson said: "Uptake was variable. The return on the investment in terms of the impact was not substantial."

A hate crime is defined as any criminal offence motivated by hostility or prejudice because of the victim's religion, race, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.

Mr Murray said it was likely that the data only scratched the surface of what was really happening across the West Midlands.

Concern

He said: "Hate crime is highly under-reported – 90 per cent of disability hate crime is never reported, which gives us significant cause for concern. When we charge someone we get a guilty," he added.

"After each terror incident we see a spike in hate crime – and then it goes back down again."

Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson, insisted that the force would continue to take a tough stance on hate crime.

He said: "We are all extremely proud that the West Midlands is a diverse region, where people from different backgrounds and cultures get on. That will not be allowed to change."

"Hate crime is not acceptable and tackling the crime is a priority of mine and West Midlands Police."

Diamond day is wonderbar for couple



Albert and Inge Goodwin, both 82, with a photograph of their wedding day in the Black Country 60 years ago THEY came from different countries but it was love at first sight for Albert Goodwin and his bride-to-be Ingeburg.

She came to Britain as a teenager, initially to look after the children of her sister, Hilse, a war bride from Brunswick in Germany, who had married a Black Country soldier.

Inge and Albert met at the Wordsley Gala in 1957 and married just four months later at Lye Church after a

whirlwind romance. Now the couple, both 82, have celebrated 60 years of marriage.

Mr Goodwin, a retired petro-chemical engineer, says they had got married quickly as least in part because her work permit was about to run out.

Mr Goodwin said: "Her English was very good although I learned some German phrases when I went to meet her family."

Inge became a British citizen 25 years ago.

The couple, of Hawkswell Drive, Kingswinford, went on to have two daughters – Angela, now 59, and Heidi, 56 – and a son, Adrian, 53. They also have seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The couple, who are members of Dudley Bowls Club, celebrated their anniversary with family and friends.

Ex anti-terror boss in court over papers

AN ex-counter terrorism boss in the West Midlands is to appear in court after sensitive documents were stolen from his unmarked police car.

Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale has been suspended and faces allegations that he breached the Official Secrets Act by failing to protect the secret files.

He has been summonsed to Westminster Magistrates' Court on December 7 where he will be charged. The classified papers were stolen from his car in May from a locked box believed to be in the boot. Personal items were also taken.

Appropriate

Due to the nature of the documents lost, the Metropolitan Police Service (Met) was asked by West Midlands Police to undertake an independent investigation.

Scotland Yard's Specialist Operations Directorate has national responsibilities in relation to offences under the Official Secrets Act and it was deemed more appropriate for an outside force independent of the officer to investigate, West Midlands Police said.

Mr Beale, a former senior officer in Staffordshire, had led the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit for several years.

A pantomime hero 'maid' in England

A COMEDY look at an English hero is on offer at a panto with a difference in Stourbridge next month. Robin Hood and his Merry Maids by the Comedy Theatre Group is being staged at Gig Mill Church Hall in Witton Street on December 15 and 16. Tickets £3 from Fair and Square, Market Street, or call 07954692593.

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Single Women

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MARGARET 42, busty chubby female. WLTM Muslim men, Pakistani, Kurdish or Indian welcome, daytime/evening, no strings. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5838907

AMANDA 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and spoken. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad-minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box No: 429287

SARAH 35, recently divorced, slim 5ft 7ins, pretty, seeks male up to 50yrs for meals out hopefully leading to more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429385

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ Text Only. Box: 4177148

JACKIE 40, slim easygoing blonde, works too hard, needs sincere male to help live up her free time. Looks/status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429381

SOPHIE, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. Text Only. Box: 4125879

MANDY 36, size 10 but busty, open-minded and doesn't suffer fools, looking for relationship with nice guy for discreet relationship. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429287

SARAH black lady, works as a nurse. 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your cougar and dress me up in my uniform. Text Only. Box: 4166063

TAMMY, sincere mature lady, easy-going animal lover. Loves travel, eating out etc. Call me if you are interested in a chat. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429333

MELANIE, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, not complicated times. Must have great sho, looks unimportant. Text Only. Box: 4037147

PAMELA, mature presentable lady, well educated, solving very young at heart. Hoping to meet presentable gent. Call me. Or text if you prefer. I promise to get back to you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429329

I am a discreet married black lady who is hoping to meet a man of any colour for some daytime chats, maybe meet up, maybe just text to prolong the interest in our ways. Text Only. Box 4063856

TINA, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429167

ATTRACTIVE widowed lady, 70yrs but looks much much younger. GSOH, fun loving. WLTM man 67+ for loving tender relationship. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429327

GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. Text Only. Box: 4151593

LINDA, late 50s lady, promises to call you back if you text or call. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429325

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CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851

ATTRACTIVE lady, 56yrs. Slim, brunette who loves life. I'm very passionate and loving. Call me if you are interested. I will reply to all calls and texts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429043

ATTRACTIVE lady, late sixties, hoping to meet a nice chap for walking, wine dining, and much much more. Age unimportant. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429161

ATTRACTIVE widow, 70s, solvent, fit and still attractive GSOH, hoping to meet a nice gent for days out, possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429159

Single Men

AMATEUR photographer, single, seeking bored broad-minded lady to have some discreet fun with a camera. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6108688

100% genuine, good looking blue eyed guy, 40s, looking to meet a black or mixed race lady, for romance and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428913

64 year old male, WLTM a lady between 60-75, for friendship and outings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419929

TALL, dark, attractive Shropshire male, 57, WLTM an attractive female, for discreet daytime fun and excitement. Any age or status. Can travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429301

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228

COLIN, 50, kind, loving, seeks kind loving, cuddly, large lady, 45-55, for LTR, love and romance. Must like hugs, kisses, cuddles and holding hands. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6091169

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175

ATTRACTIVE male, 56, 6ft, WLTM an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109

HI I am a single Indian male in my 50s, and would like to meet a mature female 55+ for a NSA friendship. Text only replies. Box no: 4627019

Five more masters from Dudley and Stourbridge

FIVE talented craftsmen and women from Dudley and Stourbridge have now been named in the hunt to find the 100 most talented and skilled Masters from the Black Country.

Creative Black Country, which set out to identify the 100 Masters, is trickling out the names of those who made the list and the latest batch includes some of the borough's favourite sons and daughters.

The public were asked to name people they know who are 'brilliant at what they do'. Hundreds of nominations were submitted for the June 30 deadline and now the 100 Masters list has been compiled.

Musician

All 100 masters will feature in a supplement in our sister paper the Express & Star soon. And many masters will appear at a special Festival of Masters event at Starworks in Wolverhampton on November 24.

Among those recently names is musician Clint Mansell. From bouncing around the Civic Hall stage to writing scores for some of the biggest Hollywood blockbusters; the former frontman of Stourbridge band Pop Will Eat Itself has certainly had a diverse musical career.

On meeting director Darren Aronofsky over two decades ago in New York the pair started a working partnership. With around 60 scores

Stourbridge author SJ (Steve) Watson

under his musical belt, the composer's soundtracks can be heard on Oscar-nominated films like Black Swan and The Wrestler, Noah and Stoker.

Also on the list is author SJ Watson who started a writing course as a hobby, only for his novel to be picked up by Richard & Judy's book club and then turned in to a movie starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth.

Stourbridge-born author Steve Watson's debut novel Before I Go To Sleep was a best seller and won lots of accolades. He released his second novel Second Life in 2015.

Stourbridge-born scientist Kay Davies who has dedicated her career to finding a cure for muscular dystrophy and researching into the debilitating condition has been named as a master.

For mastering bus driving and fundraising, Stourbridge's Dave Gerrard

Hollywood composer Clint Mansell

has been a bus driver for over 50 years and every year he coordinates events to raise money for Russells Hall Hospital, the Royal British Legion, Macmillan Nurses and many others.

He has so far raised over £22,000 for charity in 15 years.

Dudley-born Liz Griffiths is named as a master for her set decoration. Liz has used her creative skills over the last 25 years to interpret scripts for film and TV and bring them to life in some of the most recognisable shows.

Her projects have included producing sets for Doctor Who, Hot Fuzz, Shaun of the Dead, as well as designing for the Hollywood big league with The Mummy and The Conjuring 2.

For details of all masters named to date visit www.100masters.co.uk website.

Riders are still Bound for Glory

Black Star Riders, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

THREE and a half decades ago, Phil Lynott finally called it a day on what was arguably one of the most influential hard rock bands in existence, Thin Lizzy.

If only he could see his legacy now: Black Star Riders, with Lizzy's guitar hero captain at the helm, Scott Gorham, who, alongside the incredibly charismatic Ricky Warwick on vocals, blasted a Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall audience into oblivion with a superb set of awesome tunes and masterful musicianship, the like of which Phil would have loved.

Following on from a raft of support bands, keeping the roadies extremely busy – probably the best of which was up-and-coming rock radio darlings Tax The Heat with their stylish swagger – the Riders took to the stage and rattled through a handful of tunes, leaving the Wulfrun faithful, mostly of a certain age, trying to catch their breath.

It was soon apparent the band which had evolved from a touring version of Lizzy, is now very much established as an indelible imprint on today's rock scene.

Riders' classics – which is quite an achievement after just five years in existence – were rattled through, in a set full of light and shade, lasting well over 90 minutes, from the anthemic Finest Hour and Bloodshot, to the flighty Dancing With The Wrong Girl, it was a treat.

GRAEME ANDREW

A scene from the show showing Carole (Bronte Barbe) in the recording studio

Beautiful is just that in so many different ways

Beautiful, Birmingham Hippodrome

IT'S simply called Beautiful – but the musical about Carole King could just as easily have had the words brilliant, breathtaking, blessed or brave in the title.

The show at Birmingham's Hippodrome featuring the American singer/songwriter brought home the full breadth and impact of her career. There may be plenty of B words on the list to describe her but when it comes to talent she is strictly A-list.

The production covers King's life from a 16-year-old classical music student up to her seminal album Tapestry which was released in 1971. In those 13 years she met and married songwriter Gerry Goffin and had two children, the first while still a teenager struggling to make it in the piranha pool of showbiz.

King sold her first song It Might as Well Rain Until September to New York impresario Donnie Kirshner while still a teenager.

That was followed over the years by 100 hit singles which have been recorded by more than 1,000 artists. The show tells how

THEATRE REVIEWS

By Tony Altwater

she and Goffin were signed to Kirshner's songwriting factory. They were spurred on by their rivalry with another duo, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, who were a major force in their own right.

Bronte Barbe played King and you couldn't fault her acting or singing. You could see why Kane Oliver Parry as Gerry won her heart and Amy Ellen Richardson and Matthew Gonsalves were convincing and funny as their friends and rivals.

The script was smooth and unforced while the set shifted effortlessly – one moment in an office then suddenly The Drifters or Righteous Brothers would be in full show mode. It closed of course with Beautiful off Tapestry which earned a standing ovation.

Beautiful will be back at the Hippodrome from January 31 to February 3 and at Wolverhampton Grand from June 12 to 16.



BANANARAMA: THEY'RE REALLY SAYING SOMETHING

PAGE 2

THEATRE + MUSIC + TV GUIDE + PUZZLES

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Benjamins opened in Birmingham Street, Halesowen in December 1997, the building was originally The Primitive Methodist Chapel and supporting buildings erected in 1868 according to the stone over the main entrance, a foundation stone was laid in August 1889 by the then Mayor of Dudley Benjamin Hingley Esq. MP and although not named after Benjamin Hingley the stone was certainly the inspiration for the name of the Banqueting Suite. The stone now takes pride of place over the fire place in the Cornbow Room.

Set over 2 floors Benjamins can accommodate functions of all sizes upto 450 guests and indeed upto 650 guests if the whole of the building is used for one function as was the case in August 2011!

permitting, also due to its layout is ideally suited for smaller events.

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For civil ceremonies where the guests for the ceremony are 100 or less the ceremony is usually conducted in the Beaumont Suite whilst the removable wall is in place between the 2 Banqueting Suites and then the room can be opened out for the Wedding Breakfast and evening guests.

For civil ceremonies where the guest numbers exceed 100 both rooms can be open and used for the service and can accommodate up to 200 guests for the service.

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Civil Ceremonies of less than 100 usually conducted in the Beaumont Suite or Cornbow Rooms.



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Bananarama tour? We heard a rumour

It's been quite a year for Bananarama. Sara Dallin, Keren Woodward and Siobhan Fahey have been sweeping all before them – after Siobhan rejoined the band for a massive tour.

The singer had left Bananarama in 1988 to form Shakespeares Sister, with whom she played until 1996. She then appeared in films and recorded music alone, as well as appearing with Dexys Midnight Runners, before agreeing to rejoin Bananarama in February this year for a major tour.

And the band's shows have been well received by fans who have relived their youth to such hits as It Ain't What You Do... Really Saying Something, Shy Boy, Cruel Summer, Robert De Niro's Waiting... and Love in the First Degree as well as the US number one Venus and other hits like Cruel Summer and I Heard A Rumour.

Bananarama had been formed by Sara, Siobhan and Keren in 1981. When Siobhan quit, Jacquie O'Sullivan joined and they enjoyed more hits with songs like I Want You Back and Help. Jacquie later left and Sara and Keren enjoyed success as a duo with Movin' On and More, More, More.

The band's achievements speak for themselves. They have enjoyed two Band Aid appearances, an entry in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most successful female band worldwide with the most charting singles, all of which were international hits, four hitting the US Billboard Top 10 including a number one with Venus. To date they have had 32 Top 40 UK hits, released 10 albums and sold 30 million records.

TEENAGERS

The band formed when teenagers and childhood friends Sara and Keren met Siobhan. Sara and Siobhan were studying journalism at the London University of Arts (London College of Fashion) and Keren was working at the BBC.

About to be thrown out of the YWCA for 'keeping late hours' Sara and Keren bumped into ex-Sex Pistol Paul Cook in the club Taboo. He offered them a place to stay above the Sex Pistols' old rehearsal room. He ended up producing their first single Aie A Mwana. One early radio play from legendary DJ John Peel was all it took to catch the attention of ex-Specials singer Terry Hall, who tracked the girls down and asked them to perform on The Fun Boy Three single It Ain't What You Do.

They went on to support everyone from Iggy Pop to Paul Weller (Paul went on to pen a track for the band's first album) appearing on numerous TV shows while still being so skint they were using the baths at the local swimming pool for £1 a throw.

For the next 10 years the girls were everywhere and so were their hits. They became internationally hot property when hits Cruel Summer hit the US Billboard Top 10 with their video filmed in New York.

Identifying the right producers/collaborators at the right point in their career was always their strong point from Jolley and Swain who produced their debut album Deep Sea Skiving and follow up Bananarama to Stock/Aitken/Waterman who produced the platinum-selling WOW!, to Youth with Pop Life.

In 2005 they were picking out Swedish hitmakers Murlyn to produce the album Drama (singles Move In My Direction and Look On The Floor Top 20 UK, US Billboard dance

Back in the day – Keren Woodward, Sara Dallin and Siobhan Fahey



number two) and in 2009 they found a perfect foil in Ian Masterson (Pet Shop Boys, Girls Aloud, Kylie) who produced the album VIVA.

Bananarama like the Go Go's and the Bangles were not a manufactured band but three friends who came from the London club scene with a punk attitude and were always in control of their own destiny.

In 2012 Bananarama have appeared in the hit ITV comedy Benidorm, they embarked to the US for the Pinktober

tour at Hard Rock Cafes and released a brand new four tracks digital EP called Now Or Never. In February 2016, the girls embarked upon a successful Australian Tour, followed by a sold out Japan tour in October.

And now, the original Bananarama

For the next 10 years the girls were everywhere and so were their hits

line up are back together for a string of live shows in 2017. It will be fans' only chance to see Sara, Keren and Siobhan live across the UK.

Keren was in a relationship with former Wham! star Andrew Ridgeley for 25 years, but they parted ways last year. Speaking about the break-up, she said things didn't always work out but they'd remained close friends and Andrew would be attending quite a few dates on the tour.

The biggest girl group of the 1980s were sworn enemies for many years but they reconciled for a barbecue at Siobhan's home in Bethnal Green. They rekindled their love and friendship and a few months later, Keren picked up the phone and told Siobhan she should go on tour with them. They had never actually done a tour, the three of them, together. Siobhan agreed and the rest is history.

See them perform at Arena Birmingham on Thursday, November 23.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



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Andy and Paul of OMD



Nostalgia gigs aren't for us – despite the money

If ever there was a band that over-achieved, it was synth-pop pioneers OMD.

Duo from The Wirral, singer Andy McCluskey and keyboardist Paul Humphreys, sold around 40 million records including hit singles Enola Gay, Souvenir, Joan of Arc, Maid of Orleans and Locomotion.

Architecture and Morality, their 1981 hit album, gave them their first platinum disc while four others went gold. This autumn, McCluskey et al are up to their old tricks with the release of their 13th studio album, The Punishment of Luxury – which entered the chart at number four – and a tour including Birmingham Symphony Hall on Tuesday. And yet, for all their success, critics have always been a little sniffy about Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark.

Andy says: "The reality is that certain people still have attitudes and issues towards a band that plays synths. That's always been the way. So we've always just gone our own way and done better than people would have expected anyway. We are coming up to the 40th anniversary of a rolling musical accident.

"We suffered in the mid 1980s from not writing the quality consistently. I carried on without Paul in the 1990s, then we got back together and next year the band will have been together for as long as we were the first time round." Andy was determined that OMD would not join the nostalgia circuit, adding: "We were offered quite good money but we felt uncomfortable with doing just the nostalgia gigs. The whole ethos for us was to do something new."

Rock legend home gig is hottest ticket



The Black Country's resident rock god, Robert Plant, is back in action on home turf following the release of his new album Carry Fire.

On Monday the former Led Zeppelin frontman brings his Sensational Space Shifters to Wolverhampton Civic Hall for what is likely to be one of the region's best gigs of 2017. Of course, it's long been a sell out. Those lucky enough to have a ticket can anticipate a few Led Zep classics.

At Birmingham Arena tomorrow (Friday) Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, Ian Paice, Steve Morse and Don

Airey assemble as Deep Purple with support from Europe. The same venue hosts powerhouse duo Royal Blood on Saturday and Depeche Mode's Global Spirit tour on Sunday. Then on Tuesday the city centre venue hosts James Blunt, enjoying a new lease of life after his Ed Sheeran collaborations.

Those that can't make the Plant gig could get some excellent consolation at a homecoming gig for Black Country blues rock sensation Joanne Shaw Taylor at the Symphony Hall on Monday.

Other major Wolverhampton Civic Hall shows see Placebo play their rescheduled October date on

Tuesday, Goldie on Thursday (see below) and harmonious folk rock from Fleet Foxes next Friday.

Bilston's Robin 2 venue has a varied line-up with Liverpool disco favourites The Real Thing tomorrow (Fri), electro-rave-reggae outfit Dreadzone on Saturday, heavy metal heroes Tygers of Pan Tang on Tuesday and US blues singer Samantha Fish on Wednesday.

It's funk night at Birmingham Town Hall tomorrow (Fri) with Icognito, Circus VIII and Trope, and the venue hosts folk rock veterans The Oyster Band on Tuesday.

Goldie returns with 'best of the best'

Home-grown drum 'n' bass pioneer Goldie will return to Wolverhampton next week for a concert as part of his nationwide tour. The show at the Civic Hall on Thursday, November 23, Of The Journey Man tour, named after his new album, Goldie says: "This will be one of a kind: a culmination of everything past, present and future in my music, like it has never been heard before, live. I've got the absolute best of the best on stage with me and we're going to create something new right in front of your eyes."



A Christmas Carol and lots of laughs

It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas, particularly at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre where a popular amateur company is bringing A Christmas Carol – The Musical to the stage from Tuesday to Saturday. Bilston Operatic Company's production sees Charles Dickens' classic tale of Scrooge given a musical makeover. Tickets are priced from £12. For more information visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk website or call 01902 429212.

Comedy highlights include Jimmy Carr at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday and Daniel Sloss, one of a handful of British comics to find success in America, at Wolverhampton Slade Rooms on Sunday. Sean Lock brings his Keep It Light show to Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Wednesday (Nov 22) and Paul Chowdhry is at the Wulfrun Hall next Friday.

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CHOICE



Michael McIntyre

Michael McIntyre's Big Show (BBC1, 8.10pm)
Do Ant and Dec finally have a rival for the crown of 'Best Saturday Night TV Host'? When this show first aired as a one-off Christmas special in 2015 and then a full series last year, the critics and public were skeptical, especially considering some of BBC and ITV's lacklustre recent efforts at weekend entertainment shows. However, McIntyre has not only proven that variety is alive and well, but also that he is a pretty fine host and entertainer. Tonight he returns to London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane for the third run of his Big Show. After his own new stand-up routine, he introduces comedy with Joe Lycett, and music by chart-topping Scottish singer-songwriter Emeli Sande.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigella: At My Table. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Rugby League World Cup. **2.00** Live International Rugby Union: Wales v Georgia (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.
6.00 **Pointless Celebrities.** Hannah Waddingham, Gemma Whelan, Jeff Rawle, Chris Rankin, David Dixon, Sandra Dickinson, Norman Lovett and Hattie Hayridge take part in a sci-fi and fantasy edition of the quiz.
6.45 **Strictly Come Dancing.** The star-studded dance contest reaches its most dazzling annual milestone, as the eight remaining pro-celebrity duos depart from London and head north to the Lancashire coast, where they put their skills to the test against the iconic backdrop of Blackpool Tower Ballroom. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman open proceedings by introducing a grand-scale group performance, in which the couples are joined on the dancefloor by judges Shirley Ballas, Darcy Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood. Already a glamorous affair, Strictly turns the dial well and truly up to 11 for its yearly trip to the northern resort town, with even more glitzy sets and routines that push the performers to their limits. With the grand final now only a month away, the stars once again face the judges' scrutiny ahead of yet another elimination.
8.10 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** New series. The comedian's family entertainment show returns, as Emeli Sande and Joe Lycett perform, and former Labour MP Ed Balls plays Celebrity Send to All.
9.10 **Casualty.** The day of Charlotte's christening arrives, and Robyn is dumbfounded when she bumps into Glen – her terminally ill ex-fiance – who Dylan has been secretly preparing for a reunion.
10.00 BBC News: Weather. National Lottery Update.
10.20 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches.
11.50 **The NFL Show.**
12.20 **Film:** Man on the Moon. (1999)
2.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **7.00** Nature's Weirdest Events. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Show Me What You're Made Of. **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up! **11.00** Natural World: Tiger Dynasty. (R) **12.00** Rick Stein's Long Weekends. (R) **1.00** Italy Unpacked. (R) **2.00** Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. The opening semi-final of the singles competition. **4.30** Mastermind. (R) **5.00** Live International Rugby Union. Scotland v New Zealand (Kick-off 5.15pm).
7.30 **International Rugby Union.** England v Australia. Lee McKenzie presents action from the autumn international at Twickenham, where the hosts were looking to continue their fine run against the Wallabies. With commentary by Sara Orchard and Brian Moore.
8.30 **Dad's Army.** Jones buys black-market pigeons from wheeler-dealer Walker – but is horrified to discover the birds were taken from Trafalgar Square. Comedy, starring Clive Dunn and James Beck. (R)
9.00 **My Country.** A TV adaptation of the National Theatre production of the same name, written by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy and director Rufus Norris. Compiled in the days following the Brexit vote, using testimonies from people aged nine to 97, the play interweaves real interviews with speeches from party leaders, as Britannia – a personification of the nation itself – calls a meeting to listen to the opinions of her people. Amid passionate debate, barbed rebuttals and divided perspectives, she seeks an answer to the question of whether there can ever be a true United Kingdom.
9.55 **QI XL.** Extended edition of Sandi Toksvig's debut as host, in which Alan Davies, Gaiard Lloyd, Romesh Ranganathan and Phill Jupitus answer questions associated with the letter n.
10.40 **David Gilmour: Live at Pompeii.** Highlights of the guitarist's concerts at the ancient Pompeii amphitheatre in Rome in July 2016, featuring songs from his solo career as well as several Pink Floyd favourites.
11.40 **Film: Spike Island.** (2012) Drama, starring Elliott Tittensor.
1.20 **Film:** Badlands. (1973) **2.50** This Is BBC Two. **4.30** Live Rugby League World Cup.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** The Big Bang Theory. **8.55** The Big Bang Theory. **9.25** The Simpsons. (R) **9.55** The Simpsons. (R) **10.25** The Simpsons. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)
6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
7.00 **Volatile Earth: Killer Hurricanes.** The documentary series exploring the impact of past natural disasters concludes with its most recent example, the Great Hurricane of 1780. Claiming the lives of almost 28,000 people across the Caribbean, the Great Hurricane is thought to have been the most deadly in recorded history, and scientists pick through the debris left behind to paint a picture of the scale, speed and ferocity with which the storm would have hit the woefully unprepared islands. Last in the series. Previously seen on More4.
8.00 **First Humans: The Cave Discovery.** Documentary following the discovery of fossilised remains in a South African cave that were revealed to have come from a previously unknown species of human ancestor. (R)
9.00 **Film: Lucy.** (2014) A courier is kidnapped and forced to become a drug mule. When she is exposed to the experimental chemicals she is smuggling, it boosts her intelligence and reflexes to superhuman levels. She uses her newfound abilities to get revenge on her captors, but as the process continues, she evolves into something more than human. Sci-fi thriller, starring Scarlett Johansson and Morgan Freeman.
10.45 **Film: R.I.P.D.** (2013) A cop killed in the line of duty is recruited by a ghostly police force assigned to battle evil spirits. Fantasy adventure, starring Ryan Reynolds and Jeff Bridges.
12.35 The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.25** Draw It! (R)
12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Triathlon: Challenge Aruba. **6.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Frasier. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.25** The Big Bang Theory. **8.55** The Big Bang Theory. **9.25** The Simpsons. (R) **9.55** The Simpsons. (R) **10.25** The Simpsons. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)
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12.35 The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.25** Draw It! (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.30** Access. **11.35** Film: Christmas Truce. (2015) **1.20** Film: Deck the Halls. (2006) Christmas comedy, starring Danny DeVito and Matthew Broderick. **3.05** Film: A Belle for Christmas. (2014) Family adventure, starring Dean Cain. **4.05** 5 News Update. **4.10** Film: A Belle for Christmas. (2014) Concluded. **5.00** Film: Christmas in Homestead. (2016) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Taylor Cole and Michael Rady.
6.00 **5 News Update.**
6.05 **Film: Christmas in Homestead.** (2016) Concluded.
7.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** In West London, agents Max and Cona chase up more than £2,000 in unpaid parking fines, while officers in Lancashire try to collect £4,000 owed for unpaid nursery fees. (R)
7.55 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Gareth and Mitch are in north Devon with a writ to recover more than £8,000 owed by a dissatisfied customer to a supplier of windows and doors. In Nottingham, Stewart and Vic are on an eviction that will test their patience to the limits, with a landlord who wants his property back after months of rent arrears and alleged anti-social behaviour. (R)
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Reading v Wolverhampton Wanderers and Queens Park Rangers v Aston Villa.
9.55 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from Leagues One and Two, including Rotherham United v Shrewsbury Town and Wigan Athletic v Bradford City.
10.25 **NCIS: New Orleans.** The team investigates when a private plane crashes in a bayou, Gregorio tries to decide whether to stay in New Orleans or return to Washington.
11.20 **NCIS: New Orleans.** The team investigates when a Navy Seal candidate is killed weeks before his graduation, and LaSalle tries to avoid an old flame.
12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Film: Haunting of Briar House. (2015) **4.40** Access. **4.55** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R)

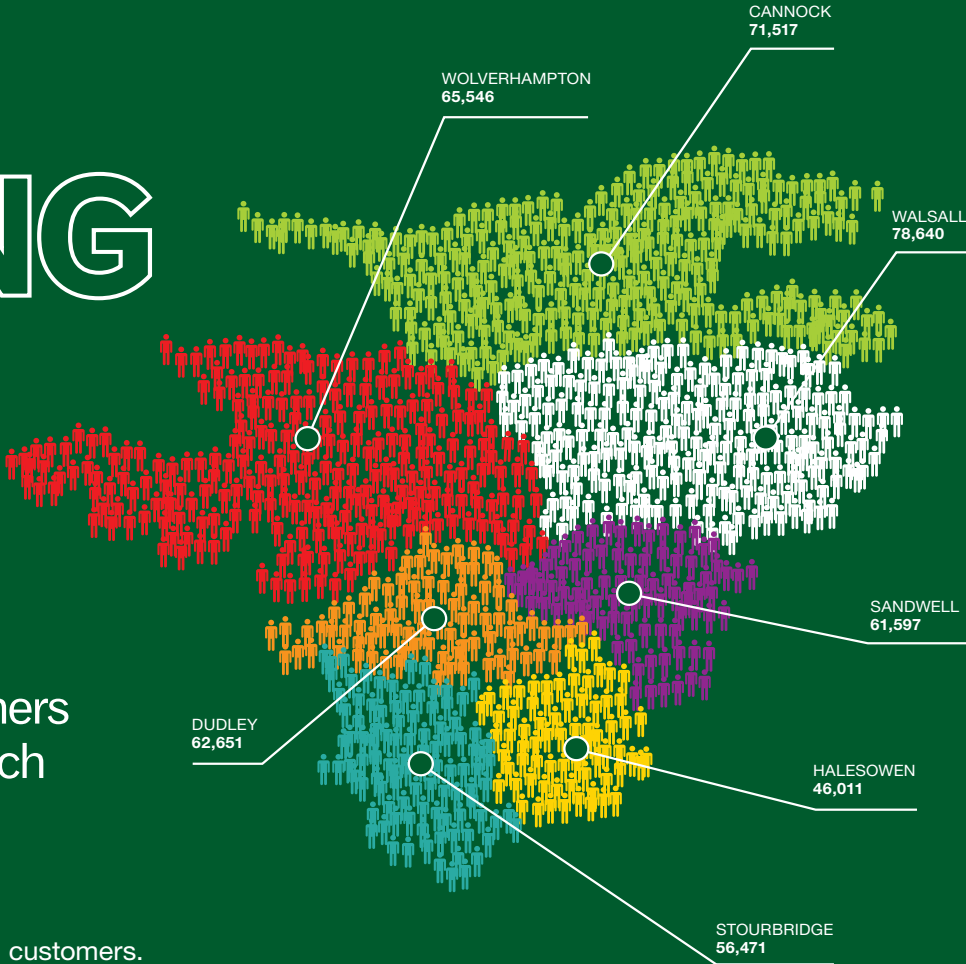
DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Natural World **8.00** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **9.00** I Know Who You Are **12.15** The Vietnam War **1.15** Top of the Pops: 1984 **1.50** Natural World **2.50** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **3.50** Close
ITV2
12.15 Take Me Out **1.30** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.00** Film: Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **3.00** FYI Daily **3.05** Film: Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **3.50** Film: Step Up (2006) **4.55** FYI Daily **5.00** Film: Step Up (2006) **6.00** Film: Jack the Giant Slayer (2013) **7.05** FYI Daily **7.10** Film: Jack the Giant Slayer (2013) **8.10** Film: Quantum of Solace (2008) **9.10** FYI Daily **9.15** Film: Quantum of Solace (2008) **10.25** Celebrity Juice **11.10** Family Guy **1.00** American Dad! **1.55** Release the Hounds **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.00 Film: Columbo: The Conspirators (1978) **1.00** Foyle's War **3.00** Midsummer Murders **11.05** The Syndicate **12.15** Foyle's War **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
11.35 The Big Fish Off **12.35** Shed and Buried **2.35** Film: The Alamo (1960) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** Film: The Alamo (1960) **5.55** Hornblower **7.55** River Monsters **9.00** An Audience with Billy Connolly **10.05** Film: American Gangster (2007) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10** Film: American Gangster (2007) **1.10** The Sweeney **2.10** The Classic Car Show **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 How I Met Your Mother **12.00** Film: The Dog Who Saved Christmas **11.00** The Dog Who Saved Christmas **1.50** Toy Story Toons: Small Fry **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** Gogglebox **12.55** Naked Attraction **2.00** Rude Tube **3.25** Gogglebox **4.20** Rules of Engagement
Film4
11.00 Song of the Sea (2014) **1.00** Picture Perfect (1997) **3.05** Just Wright (2010) **5.05** Rio (2011) **6.55** Dante's Peak (1997) **9.00** Darkman (1990) A scientist is left disgraced by a criminal gang and seeks revenge on those responsible. Thriller, with Liam Neeson and Frances McDormand. **11.00** Aliens (1986) Lone survivor Ripley joins a military expedition that encounters hordes of the creatures that wiped out her crew. Sci-fi thriller sequel, with Sigourney Weaver and Michael Biehn. **2.05** Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale (2010) **3.50** Close

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CHOICE



Ant & Dec
I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! (ITV, 9pm)
New series. Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as another batch of famous faces are flown out to the Australian jungle, where they can look forward to completing the usual round of tough daily tasks and dreaded Bushtucker Trials until one of them is chosen as this year's king or queen. At the time of going to press, no contestants have been confirmed, but whoever is brave enough to take up the challenge will face the toughest journey to the camp that the series has ever featured - plus several brand new surprises.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** BBC Newsroom Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Regional Programme. **1.45** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Songs of Praise. **3.35** Children in Need: The Best Bits. **4.50** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.50** BBC News.
6.05 **Regional Programme.**
6.15 **Countryfile.** The rural affairs show visits Hertfordshire, where Charlotte Smith makes the acquaintance of a man who has made it is mission to save the barbel in the Old River Lea. Sean Fletcher build a home fit for a kingfisher, and John Craven revisits his scouting days by cooking on a woodland fire. Plus, Adam Henson tours an estate where 'rewilding' and farming sit side-by-side, and Tom Heap examines the science behind culling, as the contentious badger cull enters its fifth year.
7.15 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present the results of last night's show before another couple leaves the contest. Featuring music from Alfie Boe, Michael Ball and Tears for Fears.
8.00 **Blue Planet II.** Wildlife that live thousands of kilometres from land, featuring footage of baby turtles using debris as life rafts and sperm whales hunting for squid deep beneath the surface.
9.00 **Howards End.** A death is followed by an unusual final request that throws the deceased's family into confusion. The Schlegels face eviction from their home, which is due to be demolished.
10.00 **BBC News.**
10.20 **Regional Programme.**
10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman presents highlights of the day's only Premier League match, featuring Watford v West Ham United at Vicarage Road.
11.15 **Ronny Chieng: International Student.** Professor Dale is impressed at the badminton skills of Ronny and his friends, and forces them to play for the college's Australian rules football team in a crucial game.
11.45 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** (R) **12.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.50** BBC News.

BBC2

7.30 Great British Garden Revival. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Food & Drink. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** International Rugby Union. (R) **2.00** Rugby League World Cup. **3.30** Wild Brazil. (R) **4.30** Coast. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R)
6.00 **Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals.** Sue Barker presents coverage from day eight at the O2 in London, featuring the final of the singles competition. Last year's showpiece match saw Andy Murray win this title for the first time in his career following a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Novak Djokovic, which also meant he would end the year as the number one-ranked player in the world. Subsequent programmes are subject to change.
9.00 **Britain's Cycling Superheroes: What Price Success?** The controversy surrounding Britain's international cyclists, examining how Dave Brailsford and Shane Sutton have led the nation to a run of recent successes in both the Olympics and the Tour de France, even as their methods have suffered criticism.
10.00 **Snowfall.** Franklin must make a dangerous choice. Teddy tries to find out the truth about Logan's death, and Lucia makes Oso a full partner - without telling Pedro. Guest starring RZA.
10.40 **Mock the Week.** Dara O Briain and Hugh Dennis front a special edition of the topical comedy show featuring best bits and unseen material from the series. (R)
11.10 **Film: The Lighthouse.** (2016) Premiere. Two men are assigned to keep a lighthouse on an island in the Irish sea in 1801. A freak storm cuts the island off from the mainland for months on end, and the isolation drives both men to the brink of madness, with devastating consequences. Fact-based thriller, starring Mark Lewis Jones and Michael Jibson.
12.50 Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Newcastle, with panellists Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry, former Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron, novelist Val McDermid and journalist Rod Liddle. (R) **1.50** Holly City. Oliver is determined to win funding for his chest wall reconstruction project. (R) **2.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Make It Pop. (R) **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.05** Film: Carry On Screaming. (1966) **12.55** ITV News; Weather. **1.05** The X Factor Live. (R) **2.35** Midlands Murders. (R) **4.30** Elton John: The Nation's Favourite Song. (R) **6.05** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.15** **ITV News;** Weather.
6.30 **The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Mark the Billingham, Aldo Zilli, Lucy Pargeter and Joey Essex pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught.
7.30 **The X Factor Live.** The fourth weekend of live shows comes to a conclusion, with the remaining acts competing to impress the audience and the judges and retain their place in the contest for another week. Presented by Dermot O'Leary.
9.00 **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** New series. Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as another batch of famous faces are flown out to the Australian jungle.
10.45 **ITV News;** Weather.
11.05 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Alegria Stratton. (R)
12.00 Gone to Pot: American Road Trip. Linda Robson, Pam St Clement, Christopher Biggins, John Fashanu and Bobby George go on a road trip across America to explore the pros and cons of legalising marijuana. (R) **12.50** Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Kevin Can Wait. **6.25** Kevin Can Wait. **6.45** Kevin Can Wait. **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** Film: Mr Popper's Penguins. (2011) Family comedy, starring Jim Carrey. **4.50** Channel 4 News. **5.20** Film: Men in Black II. (2002) Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones.
7.00 **Messages Home: Lost Films of the British Army.** Documentary about filmed messages made by British soldiers serving in Burma during the Second World War, which were recently recovered in a Manchester Town Hall basement. The footage features messages from the soldiers to their families at home, including a father speaking to a daughter he has not met, a decorated veteran troubled by the thought of killing, and a gunner longing to return to the woman he loved. (R)
8.00 **Guy Martin's WWI Tank.** The presenter builds a working replica of a First World War tank to mark the centenary of the Battle of Cambrai, and takes his tank driving test so he can take his creation on to the streets for Lincoln's Remembrance Day parade. He also delves into the history of the earliest armoured vehicles, the soldiers who crewed them, and the women who built them.
10.00 **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.00 **Film: Atonement.** (2007) A girl accuses her sister's lover of a crime he did not commit, unaware her actions will have tragic repercussions. Romantic period drama, starring Keira Knightley and James McAvoy.
1.15 The Secret Life of 4 Year Olds. Cameras follow playground friendships, romances and rivalries. (R) **2.10** The Supertet. (R) **3.05** Grand Designs Australia. (R) **4.00** Gillette World Sport. **4.25** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.55** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R) **5.20** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R) **5.35** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Whisper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.30** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.50** Cruising With Jane McDonald. **12.10** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **12.40** Film: Chasing Christmas. (2005) **2.20** Film: Santa Who? (2000) **3.25** 5 News Update. **3.30** Film: Santa Who? (2000) Concluded. **4.10** Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) **5.10** 5 News Update. **5.15** Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) Concluded. **7.00** **Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud.** Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist. (R)
8.00 **Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights.** Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the eighth round of matches, including Gloucester v Saracens, Exeter Chiefs v Harlequins and Leicester Tigers v Sale Sharks.
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **Happy 90th: Ken Dodd In His Own Words.** Profile of the comedian, incorporating some of his best performances alongside rare archive interviews and contributions from friends, colleagues and fellow comics. (R)
11.05 **Happy 90th: Another Audience with Ken Dodd.** The frantic Merseyside funnyman entertains a star-studded audience. Among those attending are Claire Sweeney, Martin Clunes, Gary Rhodes, Ann Widdecombe and Ricky Tomlinson. (R)
12.20 Britain's Best Double Acts. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** GPs: Behitoh. Closed Doors. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Stunning Solists at the BBC **9.00** Shark **10.00** Country Music Awards 2017: Highlights **11.00** Rich Hall's Countryer Than You **12.30** Country at the BBC **1.30** Stunning Solists at the BBC **2.30** Shark **3.30** Close
ITV2
1.00 Take Me Out **2.15** You've Been Framed! Top 100 Animals **3.15** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **4.15** FYI Daily **4.20** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **5.20** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.35** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.10** Film: Inception (2010) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: Inception (2010) **10.15** Family Guy **10.45** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.45** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.45** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **2.15** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV3
1.20 Film: Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **2.20** FYI Daily **2.25** Film: Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **3.55** Film: Columbo: Make Me a Perfect Murder (1978) **5.00** Wycliffe **7.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** The Syndicate **10.10** Film: The Theory of Everything (2014) **11.15** FYI Daily **11.20** Film: The Theory of Everything (2014) **12.35** The Knock **2.35** Mr Selfridge **3.25** Wycliffe **ITV4**
1.30 ITV Racing Live at Cheltenham and Fontwell Park **4.00** Film: The Alamo (1960) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: The Alamo (1960) **7.15** Football's Greatest: George Best **7.30** River Monsters **8.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special **9.00** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **11.15** Film: Hard to Kill (1990) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20** Film: Hard to Kill (1990) **1.20** River Monsters **1.50** The Avengers **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** Film: Alys and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **2.45** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) **10.05** Naked Attraction **11.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Gogglebox **1.05** First Dates **2.10** Rude Tube
Film4
1.00 Thunderbirds (2004) **2.50** When Marnie Was There (2014) **4.55** Letters to Juliet (2010) **7.00** The Cold Light of Day (2012) **9.00** Exodus: Gods and Kings (2014) **11.55** Legion (2010) **1.55** Lovelace (2013) **3.50** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Nanny for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm

An unemployed advertising executive gets a job as an au pair and tries to give the kids in her charge a break from their rigidly organised lives. She tries to impress an executive she is attracted to by claiming to still be in the advertising business, a deception that proves hard to maintain. Romantic comedy, starring Emmanuelle Vaugier and Richard Ruccolo. (2010)

TUESDAY

Dear Secret Santa, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman receives a series of anonymous Christmas cards which appear to be from an old friend of hers who recently died. Drama, starring Tatyana Ali and Bill Cobbs. (2013)

WEDNESDAY

A Snow Globe Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A cynical TV executive accidentally knocks herself out while railing against the disappointments of her life. She wakes up to find herself in another world, where she is married with two children. As she comes to realise she is not dreaming, she must decide which life she wants to live. Festive fantasy, starring Alicia Witt, Donald Faison and Christina Milian. (2013)



Boyhood, Friday, Channel 4, 12.05am

THURSDAY

Wild Card, Channel 5, 9pm

Las Vegas bodyguard Nick Wild finds himself dealing with more than just his gambling problem after he takes revenge on the criminal who attacked his friend, little realising that the thug in question is the son of a mob boss. Action thriller, starring Jason Statham, Michael Angarano and Milo Ventimiglia. (2015)

FRIDAY

Boyhood, Channel 4, 12.05am

A boy goes through a series of changes in his life, beginning as a six-year-old facing a reunion with his estranged father and a move to a new house. As he grows up, the youngster deals with further upheavals that shape his view of the world. Richard Linklater's drama filmed over the course of 12 years, starring Ellar Coltrane, Patricia Arquette and Ethan Hawke. (2014)

Mary serves up a tasty treat in her new culinary show

Channel 4's version of The Great British Bake Off has now aired, and most people would probably declare it to be a success – even if new judge Prue Leith did stumble at the final hurdle by accidentally tweeting the identity of the winner hours before the last episode aired.

But despite the revamped Bake Off's continuing popularity, it seems unlikely that original presenters Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins and judge Mary Berry are regretting not following the show to its new home – for a start, they simply haven't had time.

Mel and Sue have been busy hosting everything from Saturday night singing contests to travelogues about the Ganges, while Mary brought us Mary Berry Everyday and is due to judge a new televised contest, provisionally titled Britain's Best Cook. She's also set to be reunited with her old Bake Off friends for the festive special Mary, Mel and Sue's Surprise Party, which sees the trio coming together to throw a bash for the regulars at a

South Wales community centre.

But before that, Mary is hosting the new series Country House Secrets, which sees her exploring some of the nation's most beloved stately homes – and finding out more about the food that has been served there.

In the process, she will learn about life both upstairs and downstairs, meeting the house's present-day custodians and the dedicated staff as she explores the kitchens, gardens and private rooms, many of which are usually off-limits to visitors.

And what she learns will inspire her to make her own special recipes, celebrating the heritage and legacy of the houses.

Mary Berry says: "I am so excited to be doing this new series with the BBC – I have always had an enquiring mind so I know I will be inspired by the Great Houses we visit."

Tanya Shaw, Managing Director of Shine TV added: "I can't think of anyone more perfect to tell the

stories of these great households and to bring us such a unique insight into Britain's rich culinary past."

In the opening edition, Mary heads to Highclere Castle in Hampshire, which is home to the 8th Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and is now most famous as the real-life Downton Abbey – it was the main location for the acclaimed period drama. However, it's also renowned as a setting for some of the most lavish and influential weekend parties in history.

As well as learning more about the property's illustrious past, Mary also discovers what it takes to keep such a grand home like this going in today's world as she talks to the family, staff and the estate's loyal group of gamekeepers.

Then Mary takes to the kitchen to prepare an elaborate menu for a grand finale dinner, including raspberry tartlets and a gamekeeper's stew. Surely even Maggie Smith's imperious Dowager Countess wouldn't be able to find fault with that.



Mary Berry's Country House Secrets, Wednesday, BBC1, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

which can be a difficult time for those already struggling to make ends meet. There's advice on where to find the best bargains and Black Friday offers that should enable us to snap up cheap gifts and gadgets. Plus, consumers from across the country are being invited to pitch their questions to Lewis live on the night.

WEDNESDAY

The Secret Life of the Zoo Channel 4, 8pm

The keepers try to work out why male red panda Jung is losing weight, with a full medical examination scheduled after a special diet fails to solve the problem. West African mandrill JC is being challenged for his dominant position by his sons Ludo and Jareth and, while JC is taken for some health checks, Ludo gets 'over-friendly' with his dad's girlfriend. Tempers start to fray among Chester Zoo's Humboldt penguin colony during the annual moult – can youngsters Frazzle and Munch avoid being picked on by the grown-ups?

THURSDAY

The Search for a Miracle Cure Channel 4, 10pm

Documentary following leading

lawyer Mark Lewis, the man who fought the News of the World in the phone hacking scandal, as he joins a clinical trial that might offer a breakthrough cure for multiple sclerosis. He learned he had the condition at the age of 25 but his high-profile battle with the tabloids has exacerbated his symptoms.

Now 50, he travels to Hadassah University Medical Centre in Jerusalem, where the work being done could have a positive impact on neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

FRIDAY

The World's Greatest Bridges Channel 5, 8pm

The latest episode of this series should be even more insightful than usual, as engineer Rob Bell isn't just examining two bridges – he also meets the man who designed them, world-renowned British architect



Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast, Friday, Channel 4, 8pm

Norman Foster. Bell begins by learning more about the world's tallest bridge, the Millau Viaduct, which rises 343m over the river Tarn in southern France. It also has a claim to be the most beautiful bridge in the world and has become a tourist attraction in its own right, but it was also designed to be functional, taking traffic across the 2.5 km wide Tarn gorge. Bell discovers that at the same time that Foster was working on the viaduct, he was also creating London's Millennium Bridge, which caused controversy when it was found to wobble.

Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast Channel 4, 8pm

New series. Guest Simon Pegg joins Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty as they rustle up dishes for the weekend from their cafe on Southend Pier. On the menu is a melt-in-the-mouth lamb tagine, inspired by Simon's time spent filming in Morocco. Jamie prepares an indulgent Provençal bake, made by layering pancakes and packing them full of smoked ham and oozy cheese. This series sees Jimmy use his DIY skills to create imaginative solutions to food dilemmas, starting with a Korean barbecue served to a wheelchair rugby team from an innovative picnic table. Plus, the boys champion for more free-range duck farming in the UK.

Express & Star

READER OFFER

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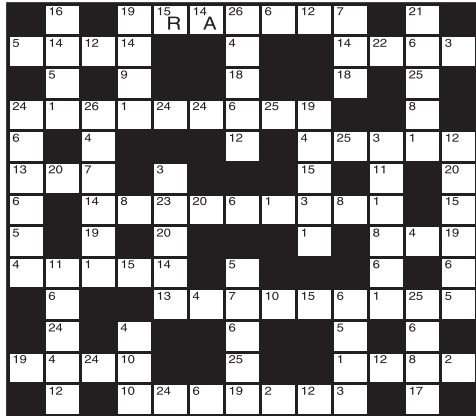
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BRAIN GYM

No.456

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R	H	J	W	D	I	N	Z	E	T	L	P	K
S	A	Q	C	F	X	Y	B	V	M	U	O	G

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

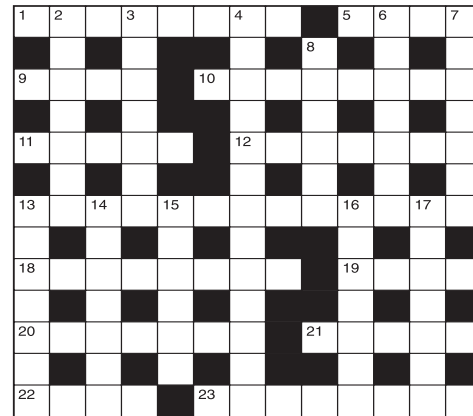
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- In rear adaptation telephoned the one making adaptations (8)
- Pass round nothing lacking warmth (4)
- A sign that cattiness brings pleasure (4)
- Its trend is loud and harsh (8)
- Conservatively correct? (5)
- Substitute wrong parcel with letter (7)
- Mood and tense as changed in moderation (13)
- It is clear father backs what he is (8)
- Aim and score (4)
- Make Peter go as person with a patron (7)
- He is a dunderhead, and greedy with it (5)
- Libertine in the garden? (4)
- Not the status of the sitter, presumably (8)

Down

- Having a regular system is the oriental way (7)
- Balloon provides ventilation on vessel (7)
- Go in with wrong main intent for hospitality (13)
- Work in theatre (7)
- Correspondence from landlords? (7)
- It's easy to make bad lies about politician (6)
- Hunter takes up role in repertory (7)
- It gets the cartographer in the library (7)
- Got paid for not quite being scholarly? (6)
- Grading a skinflint (7)
- Is not at stop on the line (7)



Quick Clues:

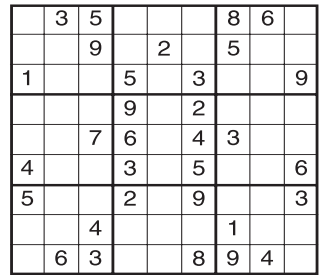
Across

- Hallow (8)
- Sour (4)
- Cowshed (4)
- Mishap (8)
- Spruce (5)
- Special gifts (7)
- Pun (4,4,5)
- Curiosity (8)
- Slender (4)
- Slavery (7)
- Dense (5)
- Vivacity (4)
- Amaze (8)

Down

- Bottomless (7)
- Distinctly (7)
- Waggishness (13)
- Detergent (7)
- Loathes (7)
- Head cushion (6)
- Flexible (7)
- Feeler (7)
- Tumult (6)
- Obsolete (7)
- Gods (7)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	7	9	2	3	6	8	4	1
4	3	6	9	8	1	2	5	7
1	2	8	5	7	4	9	6	3
3	9	2	1	4	7	5	8	6
8	1	7	6	5	9	4	3	2
6	4	5	8	2	3	7	1	9
7	6	1	4	9	8	3	2	5
2	8	3	7	1	5	6	9	4
9	5	4	3	6	2	1	7	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Alpaca; 4 Screws; 9 Well-conducted; 10 Looking; 11 Habit; 12 Stops; 14 Astir; 18 Oiled; 19 Pitcher; 21 National dress; 22 Steaks; 23 Slates. Down: 1 As well; 2 Pull out all the; 3 Cacti; 5 Couches; 6 Establishment; 7 Sedate; 8 Inigo; 13 Paddock; 15 Points; 16 Spray; 17 Crises; 20 Tidal.
QUICK - Across: 1 Chintz; 4 Hamper; 9 Superstitious; 10 Amiable; 11 Carol; 12 Stick; 14 Verse; 18 Rifle; 19 Replied; 21 Inappropriate; 22 Extend; 23 Desert. Down: 1 Casual; 2 In point of fact; 3 Throb; 5 Article; 6 Procrastinate; 7 Result; 8 Strew; 13 Cheaper; 15 Arrive; 16 Prior; 17 Advent; 20 Purge.

Quiz

- Which scientist was US ambassador to France 1776-85?
- What is the capital of Luxembourg?
- Who became director of the FBI in 1924?
- Of what nationality was the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus?
- Of what was Goebbels minister in the Third Reich?
- Who made the golden calf?
- Which animal's fur is called musquash?
- For how many matches was John Toshack Wales's manager?
- In which US state is Palo Alto?
- Who wrote The Mill on the Floss in 1860?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Honshu; 2 Simon Bolivar; 3 General de Gaulle; 4 Frankenstein; 5 Elijah; 6 Salmon; 7 Wolverhampton Wanderers; 8 Norns; 9 China; 10 Jutland.

Niner: CONSULATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

25971
29628
12893641

gives a Surrey town,
gives a second Surrey town,
gives a Surrey village.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



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Spice is right at roadside curry

A GOOD curry in a friendly and relaxed setting, which doesn't break the bank, is something many families look for when eating out.

So if you fancy authentic Indian food served in a traditional pub setting, The Garden Bar is definitely worth a visit.

The bar and restaurant, on the Birmingham New Road, in Wolverhampton, has not been open long but – when we visited – was already very busy.

Having driven past on numerous occasions on the way to work, I decided to finally try it out with my wife Kelly and our three-year-old daughter, Annabelle.

We were given a lovely little table in the corner, which looked out on to the very impressive beer garden.

The restaurant layout was modern, with neatly arranged tables alongside smaller, more private areas for couples. Large parties and families could easily be catered for, and there were two large-screen TVs showing sport.

VARIETY

When it came to the meal, orders were placed at the bar with customers quoting a table number.

The starters included a wide variety of vegetarian, and meaty options. Many veggies I know would have been delighted with the wide selection.

We went for both veggie and meat options with the aloo tikka chaat, which was potatoes served with chickpea masala, and lollipop chicken, served with a homemade dip.

The main course options included staple Indian favourites such as jalfrezi, madras, saag, bhuna, vindaloo and balti. There was also an extensive house specials menu, which included a wide range of veggie, meat and fish dishes. The biryanis were also classed

Spice up your life – curry with naan bread and rice



specials and looked very tasty. I chose a different house special, north Indian chilli garlic chicken, tempered with fresh chillis and garlic.

If the starter had been a little bit bigger than expected, the mains were the perfect size and came served in a traditional metal curry bowl.

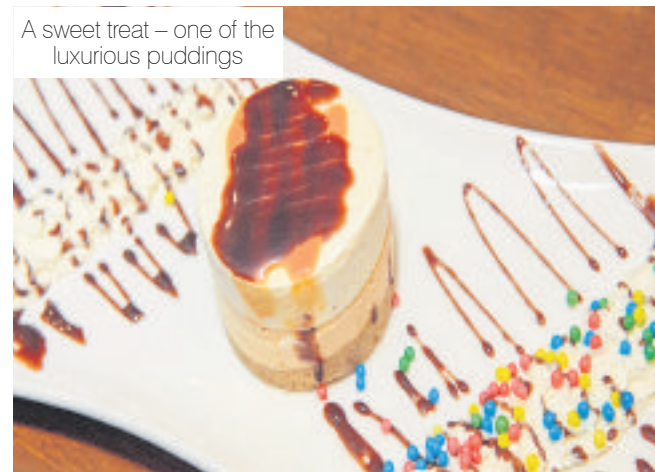
It wasn't the hottest curry I'd ever tasted but it was delightful to get the odd extra kick from the fresh chillis, which had been chopped up and sprinkled over the chicken. The chicken was tender and there was plenty of the sauce to mop up the egg rice and keema naan

we shared. Kelly opted for the rahra gosht, diced spring lamb and mince cooked together. Again, the texture of the sauce was really thick and tasty. I wouldn't like to guess what spices were used in my wife's dish but it's safe to say it was loaded with flavour – perhaps one to avoid for those who like a lighter curry, but we loved it.

If curry isn't for you and you fancy something a bit more like pub grub, the menu also included pub favourites like gammon, beefburgers and steaks.

Having looked at the more traditional children's menu, we decided to try something different with Annabelle

A sweet treat – one of the luxurious puddings



– who is generally an adventurous eater – and ordered a mild chicken korma. After mixing it with the egg fried rice, she lapped up it all.

There were, however, plenty of lovely sweets to choose from for those with a sweet tooth, including the gajar ka halwa, which is an Indian carrot pudding.

The drinks, appetiser, starters, mains and puddings all came in at around £50, so if you fancy a nice meal out in a welcoming environment that isn't going to break the bank, you could do a lot worse than trying out The Garden Bar.

JAMES DRIVER-FISHER

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Curry Life Chef of the Year 2015
Tommy Miah Winners of Best Restaurant in the Midlands 2017



commercial feature

Top Hagley Award Winning Restaurant

Abdul Ahad is more used to creating and serving up plates of mouthwatering dishes for diners as head chef of the Shenapur restaurant in Hagley, but recently Abdul received a very special plate of his own.

Abdul won Regional Chef Of The Year in the Curry Life Chef Awards 2015.

Now adding another award under his belt winning Tommy Miah Best Restaurant in the midlands 2017.

Abdul's food is celebrated and loved by all who are lucky enough to experience it.

Specialising in traditional sub continental cuisine, predominantly from Bangladesh, Abdul follows a simple formula of high quality, masterfully spiced food, cooked fresh to order.

The Shenapur, which has a contemporary yet informal interior, has been serving up the finest Indian Cuisine in Hagley for more than 19 years and has become one of the most popular destinations in the West Midlands for Indian food lovers but Abdul's skills and creativity have raised the bar still further since his appointment as head chef earlier in the year.

Abdul has devoted 35 years to his craft, building on his knowledge and self-taught creativity.



He particularly loves cooking with fish and Shenapur's menu reflects this offering monkfish, salmon, sea bass and lobster which is bought fresh and cooked Bangladeshi style infused with spicy flavours.

Other signature dishes include meltingly tender lamb shank, tandoori Chicken norotoba cooked with minced meat herbs and spices and tellapia bhuna, a traditional Bengal fish dish.

Shenapur's proprietor Angur Ali said: "Since Abdul's appointment we have seen a significant increase in diners as word has got around about our new menu which, whilst retaining all the favourites which have made

the restaurant so popular, has also introduced a fantastic new range of innovative and beautifully presented dishes to tantalize your taste buds."

Mr Ali added: "Abdul is very keen to demonstrate his unique culinary skills, flexibility and passion for Indian cooking and he and his team are happy to style any dish to suit your personal taste.

"So if you are a regular diner with us, or are considering visiting for the first time to experience unforgettable food served up in an informal and friendly atmosphere, there has never been a better time to join us.

"We hope to see you soon."



Well-presented and spacious home is new to market

New to the property market, this beautifully presented and rather large, detached family home in Belfry Drive, Wollaston, Stourbridge, is for sale through Taylors at £375,000.

With gas central heating and double glazing, its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a guests cloakroom/WC, a sitting room, a dining room, a family breakfast kitchen, a utility, four bedrooms (master with an en-suite) and house bathroom.

STOURBRIDGE
£375,000

The home lies in an end position with an additional parking space, a double-width block paved drive, a garage and a lovely enclosed level rear garden.

In more detail, the kitchen has modern wood-effect units, splash-back tiling and large ceramic floor tiles, and ample space to

accommodate a table and chairs.

The house bathroom has a modern white suite, complemented by attractive mosaic splash-back tiling.

The lounge has attractive wooden flooring and French patio doors opening out to the rear garden.

For further information on this charming property, or to book that all important viewing to see if this is the ideal next home for you, contact Taylors on 01384 395555.

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Sporty touches but a family lugger

By Ian Donaldson

Years before Peugeot bought Vauxhall earlier this year the two companies had been working together behind the scenes – on the car you're now looking at, for one.

Or looking at it if you had X-ray eyes. For the new Vauxhall Grandland X appears nothing like Peugeot's recent 3008 but beneath their unlike metalwork is more or less the same car.

Same platform (the really expensive bit to design), same engines and same factory – they're both built in France. Starting from pretty well the same price too; £22,495 Peugeot plays £22,310 Vauxhall.

Booming

So why would Vauxhall bother? Well, the SUV market has gone daft for new models in recent years and the Grandland X is predicted to be the company's second biggest seller to private buyers, behind only the Corsa.

With a recent downturn in new car sales only one area is still booming. Yes, you've guessed; it's the medium-sized SUV market where the Grandland X now appears.

As well as taking on the sister-under-the-skin Peugeot 3008 the Grandland X is up against the formidable Nissan Qashqai, the biggest seller by far and confidently expected to stay that way, even by its competitors.

So what strengths does Vauxhall bring to the mid-sized SUV party? Well, it's clear how Vauxhall wants us to view its new baby, with so many uses of the word 'sporty' in the press presentation you soon lost count.

Oh, and the creases on the side let you feel 'speed and acceleration', according to its



There's plenty of space for luggage

designer. And the front is upright and proud. Don't you just love designer-speak.

Judge for yourself, of course, but you might agree the end result is a car that looks neat and modern and hides quite nicely its purpose in life, to transport a growing family and their luggage in some comfort and at not too high a price.

Talking prices, the Grandland X starts with Tech Line trim from the already mentioned £22,310, with 1.2 litre 128 bhp petrol engine, moves through SE (£22,485) and Sport Nav (£24,595) to the ultimate version, Elite Nav which starts at £26,660.

Engine choices are currently limited to the 1.2 litre petrol and a 1.6 litre with the same bhp but much more pulling power, as is the way with diesels. Automatic transmissions are optional with either.

Vauxhall thinks most buyers will take the petrol route, where they'll find a willing power unit that takes the Grandland X to 117mph and to 62mph in 11.1 seconds, while returning an



The car looks neat and modern and does its job well in transporting a growing family

official 52.3mpg and 124g/km in the official tests.

Take a dearer diesel and those figures are 117mph and 11.8 seconds – much the same as the petrol model, but with much better promised economy at 70.6mpg average and less pollution too, with 104g/km.

Whichever engine you choose there's quite a bit of car to pull along, measuring 4,477mm long. A benefit is a boot that takes 514 litres with the rear seats in place and a more than useful 1,652 with them folded.

But you must open a door and slip behind the wheel to discover the biggest difference between the Peugeot and Vauxhall approach to family motoring with dashboards that show divergent design philosophies.

Where the Peugeot is an exercise in button denying modernity the Grandland X looks more conventionally smart, with less pressing of fingers on screens and more physical contact with switches.

And all the better for it, I'd say, as you try to adjust the radio to knock the cabin

temperature down a degree or two. Out on the road the Grandland X feels anything but sporty, the petrol engine doing its best and staying quietly in the background but a long way from inspiring you to take the long way home.

Should you encounter slippery roads on the way there's an option of IntelliGrip traction control that does its best to mimic four-wheel drive by managing the power going to the front wheels; there won't be a 4x4 because the customers don't want it, says Vauxhall.

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Latest contender for small SUV stardom from Citroën



There's a hint of ruggedness if you add on traction and hill descent control

By Ian Donaldson

Another day, another compact SUV appears on the scene. Suddenly, the world is full of little cars that look as though they could climb a (small) mountain or ford a (shallow) river.

Latest contender for small SUV stardom is the Citroën C3 Aircross, a replacement for the C3 Picasso now that small MPV people carriers are out of favour with buyers, who apparently regard them as too practical looking. So they're turning in their millions to the SUV, where building them taller and adding obvious body protection armour releases the inner Outback hero in us all.

The car joins the Citroën range alongside the cheaper C3 hatchback which has become the biggest seller in the UK range since entering showrooms in January. C3 Aircross prices start at £13,995 and top out at £19,720 for a car that its maker hopes will sell strongly on style and comfort, both attributes of Citroëns from before your grandfather was a boy.

A bit more ground clearance over the non-Aircross version of C3 and the availability of traction control and hill descent control as a £400 extra on some versions give the right models a hint of off-road ruggedness.

But the success of the this Spanish-built C3 Aircross will depend much more on how well potential buyers are tempted by the way they can personalise their cars inside and out.



There's plenty of legroom in the back

They might fancy the Hype Mistral design theme (£750) with its premium feel leather and satin chrome surrounds for the air vents. Or the tan coloured finish of the half-leather seats in the Hype Colorado design (also £750) could win the style battle.

Outside, there are similar choices to be made, from roof and door mirrors in different colours to the rest of the car or perhaps a breathing blue or spicy orange paint job for £520.

Not that Citroën has forgotten the practicalities, reckoning the newcomer has the most rear leg room in its class and the biggest boot too. Add a family pack (from £350) and the rear bench slides to prioritise leg or luggage room and the front passenger seat folds flat for that Ikea purchase moment.

Citroën must be confident buyers will be happy to spend more on spec'ing their C3 Aircrosses; the less obviously stylish C3 hatch has already seen most purchasers splashing out on two-tone paint and picking the dearer versions as a base. Which means the entry level C3 Aircross with 82 horsepower and 116g/km of CO2 will attract few buyers in Touch trim, with Feel and Flair offerings taking the majority of sales.

There are four petrol engines to choose from, all 1.2 litres but with power outputs of 82, 110, 120 and 130 horsepower. Official fuel consumption ranges from 55.4mpg to 56.5mpg and CO2 of 115/116g/km. Two diesels complete the engine choices, both 1560cc and with 99 or 120bhp and up to 70.6mpg and 104g/km.

Every C3 Aircross comes with cruise control, air conditioning and DAB radio but you need to move up a grade to the Feel for alloy wheels, space saver wheel, halogen headlights, rear electric windows and a seven inch touchscreen.

Take the top Flair grade and the goodies count mounts, with auto air con, sat nav and keyless entry and starting as highlights. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay feature in Feel and Flair models, along with Bluetooth.

Out on the road in a 110 horsepower petrol version the C3 Aircross felt immediately comfortable, thanks both to a seat with generous proportions and a ride the right side of firm. Our test run showed 38.1mpg on the trip computer, not an outstanding figure from a car that needed working quite hard through the gears to extract performance. A 110 diesel did much better, with a lively feel and 55.3mpg showing over the same route as the petrol version.

Both felt nicely special inside and both had a touchscreen that needed prodding to change cabin temperature when an old fashioned twist knob would do the job with less fiddling around.

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This Fiesta is hot and absolutely epic

By Anthony Martyn

Ford took one of the best cars it has ever made – the Fiesta ST – and improved it. More power, new suspension and improved steering have all been added to the already impressive mix, and let's make no bones about it, the result is absolutely epic.

You actually have to be a little bit of an anorak to differentiate the ST200 from the standard ST, because they actually look pretty much identical. Both get the same wide honeycomb grille and the same oversized roof spoiler, but there is one big giveaway.

That Storm Grey paint job is your only option when it comes to picking out your ST200, and as you can't have it on a normal ST, it's a bit of a tell-tale. It'll certainly draw the attention of any boy racer who knows his cars, although whether that's good or bad is a matter of opinion. When said boy racer does come snooping, though, he'll spot a few subtler features than the paintwork. Those black alloys, for example, are model-specific, as are the red brake calipers that lurk behind.

Inside, there's another big clue in the shape of the massive ST200 badge that sits proudly on the centre console, while the more knowledgeable observer might also spot the grey trim on the supportive Recaro seats.

Because the ST200 is just a Fiesta, it comes with all the practicality of a normal 1.0-litre EcoBoost. Room in the front is plentiful, but adults wouldn't want to sit in the back for too long, thanks to a spine-twisting lack of rear headroom. In truth, though, rear passenger space is an issue for most of the Fiesta's rivals, so it's unfair to criticise too much.

The Fiesta's boot space is relatively competitive, too, if not quite on a par with the



To drive, the Fiesta ST is brilliant

class leaders. At 290 litres, it's far larger than that of the Polo GTI and just two litres smaller than the Seat Ibiza Cupra's luggage bay.

To drive, the Fiesta ST is brilliant, but the ST200 is on another planet. Let's deal with the speed first, because we can quantify that. As the name suggests, the ST200's 1.6-litre turbocharged engine produces 200 metric horsepower, or 197bhp, which represents an 18bhp increase compared with the basic ST. It's more complicated than that, though, because a transient overboost function means 212bhp is actually available for short periods.

The result is a 0-62mph time of 6.7 seconds and a top speed of 143mph. It may not sound like a big improvement on the ST – a car only two-tenths slower to 62mph and just 4mph behind at full chat – but the ST200 does feel much meatier thanks to increased torque and shortened gear ratios.

It sounds great, too, thanks to some glorious whooshes from the turbo wastegate when changing gear and a twin exhaust that



Going around corners, the steering weight is almost perfect, the balance is sublime and body roll is controlled in just the right measure

produces a fruity bubble when the pedal's depressed even slightly.

More impressive, though, is the way this car goes around corners. The steering weight is almost perfect, the balance is sublime and body roll is controlled in just the right measure. You've got plenty of grip, too. If you want to enjoy any one of the world's greatest driving roads, this is the car to do it in.

It's still pretty capable if all you want to do is get to work, though. The ride is firm and

informative without being too uncomfortable, and you've got all the usual practicalities of the Fiesta. Ford even claims it'll manage 46mpg if you're careful, but if you've bought an ST200, the chances are you won't be careful at all.

The ST200 is an incredible piece of kit, but it isn't cheap. It'll set you back £22,745, which is more than enough to buy you a reasonably well-equipped Focus. In fact, it's the same price as the basic Focus ST-1. That means

that for the same money you could have something that's two-tenths faster to 62mph, breaks the 150mph barrier and offers more practicality. Alternatively, you could save about £3,000 and buy a really well-equipped Fiesta ST-3, which would be just as practical and only slightly slower than the 200.

Doing that, though, would leave you in the knowledge that one day, maybe years from now, you'll be overtaken by an ST200 and you'll wonder what might have been.

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Ford Fiesta range: urban 40.9-80.7 (6.9-3.5), extra urban 67.3-94.2 (4.2-3.0), combined 54.3-88.3 (5.2-3.2). Official CO₂ emissions 118-82g/km.

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MG LAUNCHES NEW MG ZS TO GREAT ACCLAIM

MG Motor UK has launched the latest addition to its product range, the MG ZS. Praised by consumers and the automotive community alike for its premium quality, high-specification and outstanding value, the Compact-SUV is now available from MG dealers around the UK.

Available from just £12,495, the MG ZS also comes with an industry-topping 7 year/80,000 mile warranty. Completely transferable to any new owner before the limit is reached; the highly competitive package also guarantees any genuine replacement MG parts for the remainder of the agreement. An extension of the manufacturer warranty, this gives customers complete peace of mind.

Three power-assisted steering modes also come as standard on the Excite and Exclusive models. While Urban steering offers a lighter and quicker response at low speeds and when parking, the Dynamic mode is designed to increase the steering effort, deliver a higher damping effect and increase the centre definition at medium and high vehicle speeds.

An industry-leading 8" touch sensitive infotainment screen is supported by DAB radio (on the Exclusive and Excite models), while Bluetooth hands-free and remote central locking is available across the range. Cruise control is also included, while air conditioning comes as standard on Excite and Exclusive

models, and Satellite Navigation and a rear camera are standard on the Exclusive variant.

MG also stands out from the crowd with its offer of Apple CarPlay on the MG ZS Excite and Exclusive variants at no extra cost. The safer way to use your iPhone in the car, CarPlay takes the things you want to do with your iPhone while driving and puts them on the car's massive 8" touchscreen in-built display.

Available in Arctic White, with optional Laser Blue, Black Pearl, Cosmic Silver and Spiced Orange, as well as a specially-developed Dynamic Red, the all new Compact-SUV has been favourably compared to premium models produced by competitors.

With one of the most generous shoulder, leg and headroom capacities in its segment, the MG ZS offers a premium travelling experience for driver and passenger. An incredible 448 litres of boot capacity – plus a split-level boot – provides plenty of room for prams, luggage, outdoor leisure equipment or the

weekly shop, while keen cyclists and adventure sports fans will benefit from numerous compartments throughout the car which provide additional storage.

Matthew Cheyne, Head of Sales and Marketing at MG Motor UK, said: "The MG ZS is MG putting its money where its mouth is. With the introduction of a 7 year warranty, we are making a clear statement of intent about the quality of our design, engineering and manufacturing. Benefiting from global design expertise, but reengineered specifically for UK roads, we are confident that the MG ZS will prove exceptionally popular. With its unbeatable warranty, compelling price and high-quality spec, we expect the MG ZS to be a strong seller."

To find out more, or to book a test drive of the MG ZS, visit: mg.co.uk/mg-zs



3

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Model shown: MG ZS Exclusive manual with Tri Coat paint (optional extra £695) in Dynamic Red at £16,190 OTR or £215.87 a month for a 60 month conditional sale agreement. Offer shown available on MG Exclusive manual with solid paint at £15,495 OTR or £199 a month for a 60 month conditional sale agreement. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months 'Vehicle Excise Duty'. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply.

*0% APR: Conditional sale. 0% APR available on all MG ZS models until 31.12.2017. A minimum deposit of 20% applies. 0% is not in conjunction with any other offer. Finance by MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YT, subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over at participating dealers. See your local dealer or visit mg.co.uk/offers for details.

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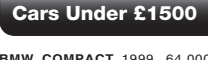
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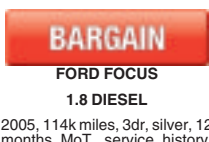
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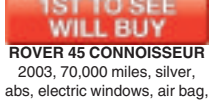
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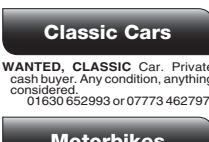
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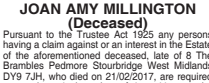
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Some of the award winners at the ceremony at the Copthorne Hotel



Abbie Hinton from the School of the Year



Aspiring Athlete winner Freya Robson



Opening winner Greg Southall



Power of Sport winner Natty Blewitt



Coach of the Year Wayne McDonald and Diane Davies, Express & Star

Region's sports stars honoured at ceremony

INSPIRATIONAL tales of determination, grit and teamwork emerged as the winners were revealed at this year's Black Country Sport and Physical Activity Awards.

Ten awards were handed out on the night recognising the achievements and contributions of athletes, coaches, sport clubs and volunteers.

A total of 35 finalists were in the running for the awards, run by Active Black Country.

Former women's England Rugby player Maggie Alphonsi MBE was special guest and gave an inspirational speech about her journey from being born with a clubfoot to lifting the Rugby Union World Cup in 2014.

ACB vice chairman Amanda Tomlinson kicked off the ceremony, at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill. She said: "The Black Country has got a wide and diverse history. We are defined by our people."

"The levels of deprivation in the Black Country are significant and physical inactivity is highest here across the region. People are not getting the benefits of sport, which is quite worrying and significant. But sport has got the power to change this."

Project

The first award of the night went to Dudley Disability Swimming Project for Sportivate Project of the Decade. The group runs swimming sessions for young disabled people, where more than 20 attend each week. Funding ran out over a year ago but organisers have been able to keep the project afloat.

Next up was Tividale Football Academy which won Community Club of the Year. The club was praised for forging strong links with local schools and the police and helping to change young people's lives for good through the power of football.

Tividale has 350 youngsters in its ranks and more than 40 volunteers across 24 teams.

Keith Thompson, from the club, said: "It is a fantastic achievement, for the volunteers, players and everybody else involved with the club."

School of the Year was won by the Federation of Abbey Infant & Abbey Junior Schools in Sandwell with representative Abbie Hinton picking up the award on its behalf. The school was praised for its PE

SPORTING FEATURE

By Ben Lammas

"The Black Country has got a wide and diverse history. We are defined by our people."

curriculum which helped children with their moral, spiritual and cultural development. Abbie Hinton, from the school, said it was a great achievement to win the award.

The Community Impact Award went to Benson Community Project in Smethwick. The initiative has helped to engage more than 1,000 residents in different activities, boost the relationship between police and youths and help young people get into work and join football teams.

Paul Landucci said: "I'm astonished and amazed we have won this award. Smethwick itself should be winning this award. It's about people who love what they do."

The Coach of the Year award went to judo teacher Wayne McDonald. Wayne has taught judo for 13 years and recently developed his coaching skills by teaching visually impaired youngsters at the annual British Blind Sport Day. He was praised for being a positive role model who is always willing to help. Wayne trains beginners at school and community clubs and coaches at competition up and down the country.

The Aspiring Talent award went to Freya Robson, who is a second-dan black belt in karate. Freya has won three medals for England and recently achieved gold in the under-21 kata competition at the Wado European Championships in Paris.

Practising karate has helped give her social skills and the ability to focus and she now teaches karate after recently qualifying as a junior coach.

She said: "There is a lot more that goes into sport than just training and competition. There is a lot more people that have helped me than they realise."

Community Rangers FC picked up the Satellite Club of the Year award as part of an initiative called 'Football for All'.

Rangers set up a satellite club, with Sporting Equals, at Dudley Goals Soccer Centre to work with hard to reach groups from mosques and schools. The project has seen an increase of youngsters and their families get on board which has resulted in a base of volunteers.

The Power of Sport award went to Natty Blewitt, who is bound to a wheelchair. But Natty, who found being active a challenge, joined a 5km runners group for beginners.

She found the route challenging but showed great resilience and identified routes more suitable. Now her group has moved to flatter ground to enable her and others in wheelchairs to take part.

She said: "I'm really astonished to win the award. All of this has made a big change to my life. Just a few years ago I weighed over 20 stone but I have since lost nine stone."

Acelya Toprak won Sports Personality of the Year. She has been performing at the highest level of judo for more than 10 years and is now moving up to senior level. She has won three gold medals, two silver and one bronze competing at European events, all while studying for a degree.

Support

The Unsung Hero award went to John Totney and Martin Floyd, who in the past two years have tallied up 1,400 hours, or 58 days, of voluntary work supporting disabled people at Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury.

John, now retired, has been in the role since 2013. Martin, who was born with spina bifida and hydrocephalus and is in a wheelchair, became a volunteer after visiting the gym. They each give 20 hours of their time a week.

The final award of the night was the Elvis Gordon Chair's Recognition Award which went to Black Country Talent Match, a project which helps disadvantaged young people into work and use sport and physical activity as one of the routes.

Darren Harris, from the project, said: "Sport is not just about the physical benefits but the mental health benefits too."

Young kickboxer Ellie shows she is all Hart

THE Hart School in Rugeley is celebrating the success of one of its students, who has been invited to join the Great British Kickboxing Team.

Ellie Harvey, aged 12, represented Great Britain at the WAKO Junior European Championships held in Skopje in Macedonia.

Thirty-seven countries competed in this prestigious event, with a total of 1,600 competitors selected to represent their respective age and weight categories. Ellie fought in the under-12s section, competing against older and significantly taller girls, dominating at many stages of the competition and refusing to surrender to her opponents. After a tense semi-final she lost out by two points, but earned herself a bronze medal.

Holly Hartley, acting executive principal of the Hart School, said: "Ellie's accomplishments are outstanding, her determination and resilience set an example to us all. We are all very proud of this young lady, and are sure we will see her representing her country at an even higher level, in the not-so-distant future."

Merse enjoys sharing Molineux memories

FORMER Arsenal, Villa and Walsall midfielder Paul Merson told stories about his glittering playing career to help raise funds for the Steve Bull Foundation.

Merson, equally famous for his role as a pundit on Sky Sports, teamed up with the legendary Wolves striker to entertain a captivated audience of football fans at Molineux.

The 49-year-old, who also had a spell managing Saddlers, told stories about his trophy-laden time at Arsenal and also commented on the 21 caps he won for England and discussed his television career.

He admitted enjoying his time back at Molineux.

"I have known Billy and his wife Kirsty a long time so when they asked me to come up and help out it wasn't a problem at all," he said.

"They are good people who do a lot of work for charity. It's great to help them and great for me personally to be back at Molineux. I got a standing ovation here one day when I played for Villa in a pre-season friendly."

Legends turn out for sick keeper Dudley

FORMER stars of Albion and Villa have agreed to dust off their boots in a benefit match for ex-goalkeeper Derek Dudley. Dudley, who spent four years at Villa in the 1980s and also played for the Baggies, is terminally ill at the age of just 47.

Members of Villa's 1982 European Cup-winning side Gordon Cowans, Nigel Spink, Pat Heard, Tony Morley and Peter Withe will line up alongside Albion heroes Richard Sneekes and Bob Taylor in the Midlands Legends team taking on Romulus Veterans at Sutton Coldfield Town on Sunday.

Former Villa men Julian Joachim, Darren Byfield, Lee Hendrie and Tony Daley will also be in attendance. Dudley lives in Rugeley with his wife Helen and two children Daniel, 13, and Elizabeth, 11.

Admission is priced at £3 for adults; £1 children; and a family ticket for two adults and two children is £5. Those in attendance are invited back for refreshments and an auction at The Yenton pub, Sutton Road, Wyde Green. All proceeds will go directly to Dudley and his family.



Glassboys go through, but ref under fire

St Neots Town 2 Stourbridge 3
STOURBRIDGE fought hard to win this second qualifying round tie and a trip to Bradford Park Avenue on December 2.

However, Stuart Pierpoint and Aaron Forde picked up bookings which will see two key players out of the Glassboys next league game at Shae Lane. And boss Gary Hackett was far from happy with the referee. "It was a competitive game spoiled by the referee who seemed to have no control, and made some poor decisions for both sides," he said.

In front of a crowd of 323, all the goals were scored in the second half, with three coming in the opening five minutes.

St Neots hit Stourbridge just a minute after the break when a neat flick by Tom Meechan found Dion Sembie-Ferris whose shot bounced over Matt Gould and into the net. Almost immediately the Glassboys were on terms when a corner from Tom Tonks was headed in by Leon Broadhurst.

Aris Christophorou was brought down on 54 minutes in the area and Luke Benbow gave Stourbridge the lead from the spot, his third goal in two games.

Benbow, looking fully fit now after his recent move from Solihull, shot wide on 70 but then produced a clever short free kick six minutes later into the path of substitute Josh Green whose excellent shot flew in. Jack Bradshaw bundled in a scrappy goal on 82 minutes.

Midfielder Will Marsh, signed on loan from AFC Telford on Friday made his debut as a second half substitute.

Point in safe hands on Platt's 100th Yeltz appearance

Halesowen Town 0 Shaw Lane AFC 0
HALESOWEN settled for a hard-earned point in a stalemate against a strong Shaw Lane outfit.

The high-flying Ducks started on the front foot, fresh from their recent FA Cup exploits, as Alexander Byrne's 25-yard free-kick was tipped over by home keeper Dan Platt after just two minutes. Platt continued to keep the visitors at bay on his 100th Yeltz appearance.

But Halesowen gradually weathered the storm and had their first chance after 18 minutes when Dan Udoh's low shot was kept out by goalkeeper Jonathan Stewart. Udoh then laid the ball off for John McAtee, but his low shot was saved at the foot of his post by Stewart in the 35th minute.

Udoh set Alexander Woodhouse free to cross for Bradley Lewis to head just high early in the second half and McAtee scuffed a 69th minute shot wide.

With five minutes remaining, a low shot from Halesowen's Enoch Ekong was gathered by Stewart but home defender Marcus Poscha cleared off the line in the final minute.

Harris races to hat-trick of awards



Luke Harris - award treble

LUKE Harris was the most decorated rider at Cradley's End of Season Presentation.

The 18-year-old walked away with three trophies to cap off a fine year for the youngster.

Harris received the Wayne Garratt Memorial Trophy for Most Improved Rider, the Max Cartwright Memorial Shield and comfortably secured the Most Bonus Points award.

Harris said: "It's been a great year and to have three awards to show for it feels brilliant."

"I've got my head down this year, I've shown everyone what I can actually do and it's nice to see the fans appreciate it."

While Harris claimed the most awards, it was skipper Tom Perry who received the most prestigious trophy available. Club supporters voted

Perry as their rider of the year as he picked up the Ivor Hughes Memorial Trophy.

"I had to get a round of drinks in because I bet someone that Danny Ayres would win it no problem," Perry joked.

"But on a serious note it's a great honour to be Cradley's rider of the season and it means a lot to be voted for it by the fans."

SECOND STOUR LOSS ON TROT

Stourbridge RFC 16 Sale FC 39
STOURBRIDGE suffered their second loss in a row but stay top as Sale took the spoils on the new AGP surface.

It was a dominant display by the visitors against a team fielding more changes and with two debutants who had less than four hours team training between them.

One of these - Robbie Forbes - set the game alight after just four minutes with the opening try. Chris Scott was unable to add the extras.

In a move that was to become commonplace over the next 70 minutes, Stour's lineout ball was lost and recycled ball was taken by Sale centre Chris Mayor who scythed through a stretched defence to score by the posts. Fly half Chris Johnson converted. The hosts took back the lead five minutes later through a Scott penalty. But then Sale began to assert themselves on the game.

An offside infringement gave Johnson an easy shot at three points but his kick hit the upright. He made no mistake with his next kick, converting a try by No 8 Tom Ailes to take the lead.

Scott did land a penalty a few minutes later but this was to be Stour's only other first half score.

Johnson had an easy two points converting Andrew Hughes' try, a penalty from 35 metres extended the lead and two minutes later Stourbridge saw Rod Petty sin-binned.

Sale took just nine minutes of the second half to secure their bonus point try through Anthony Bingham but the try was unconverted. However, Johnson did add another penalty and rounded off his day by slotting over a conversion following Bingham's second try of the day.

Sale replacement hooker Harvey Derby was yellow carded seven minutes from full time, then Stour had the last say when a quick tap penalty saw Nigel Mukarati crash over.

Stourbridge Lions won 22-17 at Wolverhampton with tries from Scott Langdon, Alex Jones and Sam Wilson, with two conversions and a penalty from Tom Mitchell.

Sailing stalwarts are honoured



The late David Harris and wife Mary have been recognised for their sailing commitment

A SAILING veteran will collect a top award - while her husband is posthumously honoured with the same accolade.

Mary and David Harris, of Himley Hall Sailing Club, were recognised for more than 40 years of dedication and commitment to the sport with an RYA Lifetime Commitment Award. The honour will be presented at a ceremony in London on November 24.

David sadly died in July, aged 83, a day after learning he and Mary had won the award.

The couple joined Himley Hall in 1970, and had an immeasurable impact. David co-founded the club's training section and spent more than 40 years as principal instructor. Meanwhile, as social secretary for 25 years, Mary organised club events and catering. Her charity fundrais-

ers have also raised substantial funds for the RNLI. In 2013 the couple won an Old Pulteney Maritime Heroes Award, picking up £1,000, which they immediately donated back to the club to help improve training and classroom facilities.

David taught at Bingley Secondary Modern, Highfields Comprehensive and Bilston College of Further Education as well as co-founding the Wolverhampton Astronomical Society.

Mary, 85, said: "After David retired as senior instructor he became Life President of the club's training section. When we found out we had won this award we were so thrilled and humbled that our years of service had been recognised. You don't do it for glory but to help in the community."

Kipping end club's hold on trophy

STOURBRIDGE'S Worcester and District Division 2 team were supposed to play Mercia, but Mercia never arrived, having forgotten about the match so Stourbridge won by default.

Unfortunately Stourbridge's winning run in the WDCL Humphreys Cup came to an end after having won it for three years in a row. The semi-final against Walsall Kipping was very evenly balanced on paper, but SCC lost 3-1 on the night.

In Dudley division 1 SCC had a decent team assembled, but a South Birmingham team outgraded Stourbridge on three of the four boards and SCC lost 3-1.

On Wednesday night there were another two matches. South Birmingham were again Stourbridge's visitors, this time in Dudley division 2. Ron Evans got a draw and Richard Wilkinson won, but SCC lost the match 2½ - 1½.

The WDCL Division 2 'A' team continued their push for promotion at Boldmere, who fielded their strongest team this season. All six Stourbridge players pressed hard for a win but none were able to succeed and the match ended as a 3-3 draw with all six games being drawn.

Stourbridge are second in the table having won two, drawn one and are one point behind leaders Halesowen 'B'.

Anyone interested in joining Stourbridge chess club should contact Dave Scriven on 01384 423642 or visit www.stourbridgechess.f9.co.uk for more information.

Yozza's Grand Slam hopes are battered

TIPTON darts star Jamie Hughes saw his Grand Slam hopes take a battering after two group stage defeats.

'Yozza' lost to Raymond van Barneveld before then being whitewashed 5-0 by Irish youngster Steve Lennon.

"I've been practising well but it's not been working on stage," said Hughes, who was meeting Gerwyn Price in his final group game on Tuesday.

"I tried my best but it just isn't happening for me. I didn't settle until the third or fourth leg and it was too late by then. A lot of darts weren't badly thrown but they just landed on the wrong side of a wire."

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